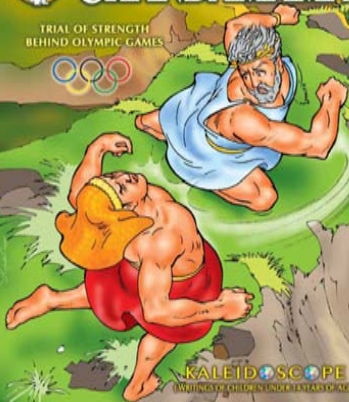




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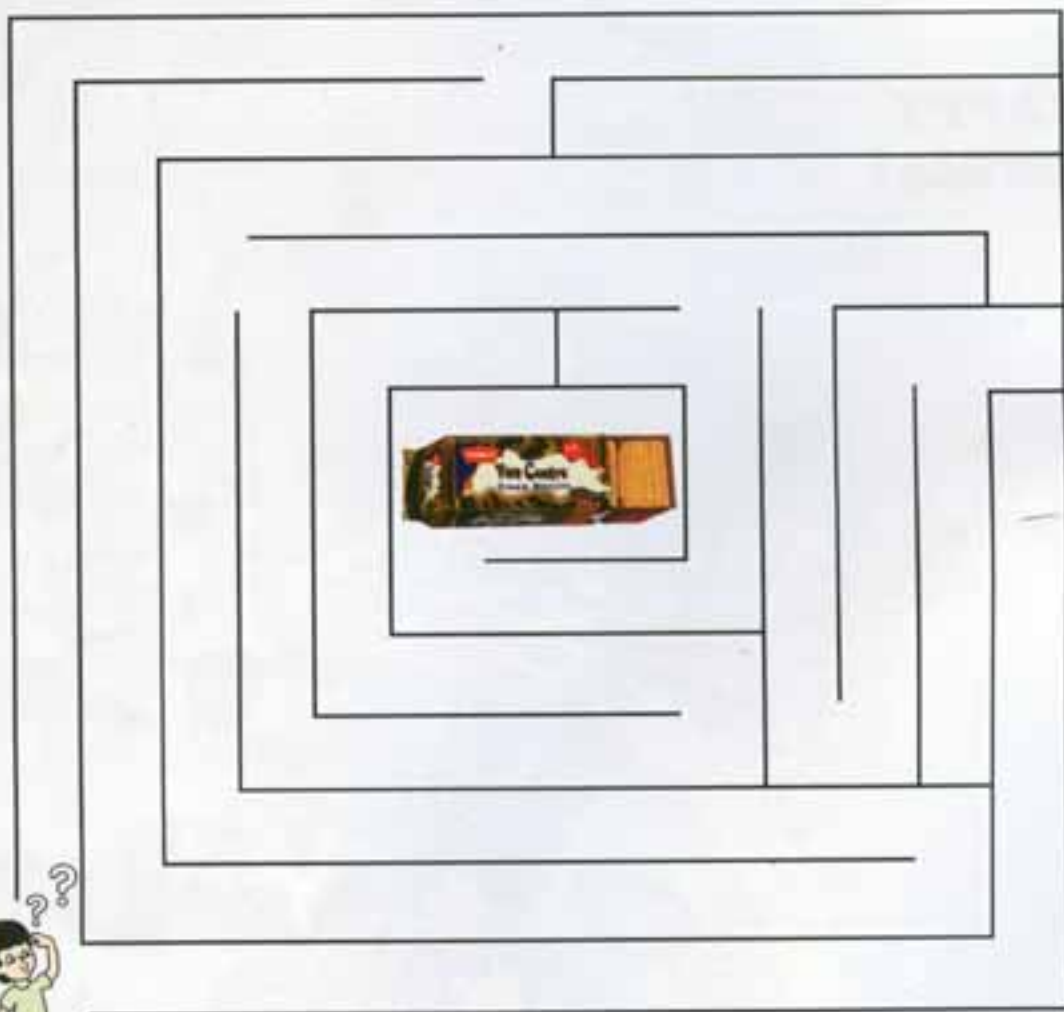
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# Killing the goose that laid golden eggs



The title is a proverb with which many of you are familiar. A woman had a goose which laid a golden egg a day. One day she thought, it was better to take all the eggs out so that the goose would not go and lay any egg in the neighbour's courtyard. In trying to do that she, of course, killed the goose and there was no golden egg after that.

Aren't we doing the same towards our planet earth? Aren't we thoughtlessly squeezing out of it profits – the process resulting in our turning it to a global wasteland? You have read about the devastating earthquake in Iran. The city of Bam, with its ancient monuments of glory, is reduced to rubbles. Tens of thousands of people are dead. It was followed by another earthquake in the island of Bali, Indonesia.

The moment we hear of earthquakes, we cannot but remember our own experience of the terrible earthquake of not too distant a past in Gujarat.

An earthquake is a natural calamity. But it is time we wondered if man is not playing a dubious role in bringing about this phenomenon. Let us consider an analogy. The skin is an important part of our body. Its pores help respiration and maintain the body temperature. When these pores get blocked, there are eruptions like boils, and cracks develop leading to several skin disorders. Similarly, our planet earth has a surface that was formed through millions of years of upheavals and Nature's efforts to create a balance. Now, with the destruction of forests, construction of high-rise buildings over large areas of the earth, factories, industries, dams and other activities that go with urbanisation, isn't that invaluable balance being disturbed? The core of the earth has to make readjustments, and that could very well result in violent movements-earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

There has never been a serious global assessment of how much we can dig for water, oil, minerals, etc, and how many explosions we can make over the ground and underground which Nature can absorb. We have not even been able to check the pollution of our rivers and our atmosphere. Who then can predict the conduct of Nature at this rate of our irresponsible conduct?

It is time we learnt to respect Nature, to stop being merciless towards this ever-merciful source of our life.

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**Peace, with justice and honour, is the fairest and most profitable of possessions, but with the disgrace and shameful cowardice it is the most infamous and harmful of all.**

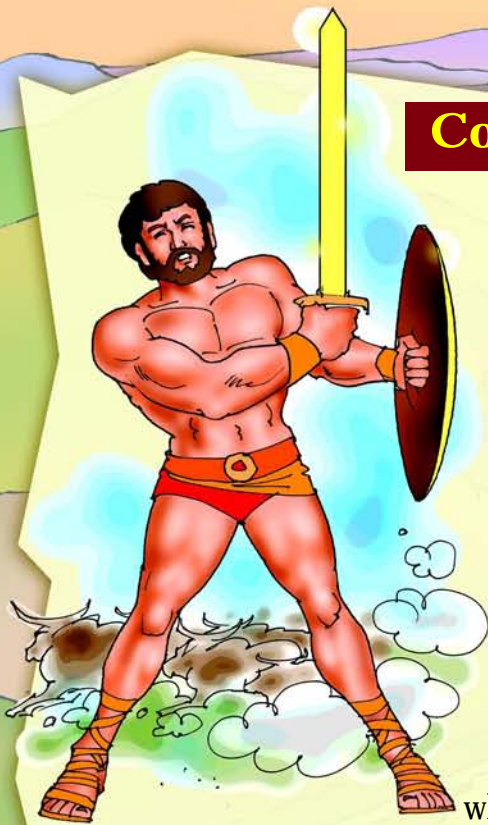
**Those who know how to win are more numerous than those who know how to make proper use of their victories.**

**- Polybius**





## It all started with a fight between two gods!



**L**egends abound on the birth of the Olympic Games. It is believed that two Greek gods, Zeus and Kronos (also called Cronus), wished to have possession of the earth and fought for it. First they wrestled and, according to one story Kronos, who was the father of Zeus, won but the victory was not decisive. So, they engaged in a sword fight in which Zeus vanquished Kronos who was killed. Zeus celebrated his victory by holding the first of the Games. In Greek mythology, Zeus is described as the god of Thunder. Ancient statues of Zeus depict him as holding a heavy thunderbolt with a bent arm. This could be a precursor of the javelin which, too, is held with a bent arm before it is thrown.

Another legend associates Pelops, the Greek god of Fertility, with the Games. He was desperately in love with beautiful Hippodameia. Her family stipulated a condition—that he should win in a chariot race and that he had to race with Hippodameia's brother, Oenomaus. Pelops was so determined to marry Hippodameia that he shamelessly cheated his opponent. He had his rival's chariot wheels replaced with wax pins which melted when the chariot was driven fast. Pelops barely scraped home but won his bride. As a thanksgiving to Zeus whom he worshipped, he instituted the Olympic Games.

Yet another legend centres around Hercules, who was the most popular hero in Greece. He was hired by King Augeas to clean his stables. This exercise required diversion of a river, so that it flowed through the stables. Hercules managed to do that. However, he was disappointed when the king failed to reward him. Hercules was, naturally, angry and he took revenge on the king and killed him in an encounter.

He drove all the cattle away from the stables. He commemorated his victory by organising some games in honour of his father, Zeus. As these were held in Olympia, they came to be called Olympic Games.

### When athletes were semi-gods

The institution of the Olympic Games united all Greeks by the proclamation of ekecheiria (suspension of hostilities) for a three month period. Isocrates in his *Panegiricos* comments on the importance of the Games as they remind all of their common heritage. An Olympic victory reflected on the home city of the athlete, whose name was inscribed in historical memory. He received the prize in front of the temple of Zeus, in a moment of mystical communion with the gods. His return to the city was through a demolished part of the fortification walls, an act which signified the dispensability of the walls. Fame followed him for the rest of his life and immortality was ensured. Most of the competitions had mythical battles as their prototypes, thus elevating the athletes to the level of gods and semi-gods and whose agon (competitive effort) became the embodiment of their drive to excel.



# Hitting the Target

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. The howling of jackals faded into the weird laughter of unearthly beings. Flashes of lightning revealed ghostly faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve. He climbed the ancient tree and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, even the ablest of personalities take the help of others to carry out their missions. But, it seems, you are out to reach your goal all alone. I wonder if that is wise. Let me tell you the story of two brothers. One's success was due to the other's help. Pay attention to my narration, O King! That should give you some relief."

The vampire went on: In days gone by, there was a prosperous town called Dhanyakatak on the banks of river Krishna. Vishnugupta, the richest merchant of the town, had a daughter called Kamala. She was well-groomed and beautiful. Being the only child of Vishnugupta, she was to inherit her father's vast wealth.

Priests and relatives came up with many proposals for Kamala's marriage. But Vishnugupta was not satisfied with any one of them.

In the same town lived Devsen. He hailed of a great family. His grandfather, in his time, was the most famous man in the kingdom. But they had become poor. It was mainly because Devsen's father had given all his wealth for charity.

Vishnugupta's grandfather had been greatly benefited by Devsen's grandfather. They traded together and Devsen's grandfather being wiser and wealthier than







Vishnugupta's grandfather, came to the latter's help several times. But, with the family of Devsen falling into bad days, the connection between the two families had snapped. Vishnugupta showed no concern for Devsen.

Devsen had two sons, Narendra and Mahindra. Narendra was only one year older than Mahindra. The two brothers loved each other very much.

At a time when the family was passing through a particularly bad period, the two brothers stood before Devsen and said, "Father, why don't you ask Vishnugupta to choose one of us for his son-in-law? The marriage would help us tide over our difficulty!"

"It is for Vishnugupta, who was indebted to my grandfather, to put forward the proposal, not me. However, I've no objection to your meeting him with the proposal," said Devsen.

The two brothers duly met Vishnugupta and said, "We understand that you are on the lookout for a suitable young man to marry Kamala. Why not choose one of us?"

Vishnugupta was not inclined to oblige either of the brothers. It was because he had an aversion for people

who had grown up in poverty. Nevertheless, he respected Devsen's hoary past and could not summarily reject the proposal.

"I have decided to give my daughter in marriage to only such a young man who has experience in handling commerce and business. You lack that quality," observed Vishnugupta, certain that his words would totally put out the two brothers.

"Sir, the wise man that you are, how can you say that we lack that quality without trying us?" the brothers protested.

Vishnugupta found himself rather cornered. However, he brought out two thousand rupees and gave a thousand each to the two brothers and said, "He will pass in my test who can whip up a lakh of rupees out of a thousand in a year! Go and try your luck!"

The two brothers took leave of him. They went in two different directions, deciding to meet each other at the end of a year at a certain place.

Vishnugupta was sure that the two brothers would fail to fulfil the condition. He had given away two thousand rupees only to get out of the situation honourably.

And he did not prove wrong. At the end of the year when the two brothers met at the appointed place, both looked sad.

"How have you fared?" asked Narendra, the elder brother.

"With hard but honest labour I could make only ten thousand rupees," replied Mahindra.

"Don't feel discouraged. To turn a thousand into ten thousand in a year is an excellent feat when I know that you would not have been dishonest," commented Narendra.

"Brother, what about you?" asked Mahindra.

"Well, I have made ninety thousand, though not in any honest way!" Narendra confessed.

They stood in silence for a moment. Then Narendra said gravely, "Mahindra, I've an order to pass on you. Promise that you shall obey it and never speak a word of it to anyone. I shall be responsible for what I'm asking you to do!"

"I promise to obey you, brother!" uttered Mahindra in a solemn voice.



“Take this ninety thousand. It will make a lakh with what you have. That should hit the goal!” said Narendra.

Mahindra stood speechless. Narendra patted him on the back, thrust the money into his pocket, and said, “I shall go back to my place of business and flourish again, this time honestly. Don’t worry.” He then went away without giving Mahindra a chance to speak.

Mahindra did as promised. Vishnugupta had to let him marry Kamala. The vampire paused for a moment and asked in a challenging tone, “O King, wasn’t Narendra more eligible to claim Kamala’s hand since he had come nearer to the target in earning? Why did he sacrifice his claim? Answer me, O King, if you can. If you choose to keep mum though you may know the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders!”

King Vikram answered with out a moment’s delay. “Narendra knew that Vishnugupta had stipulated an impossible condition only to avoid them. In other words, Vishnugupta had not been honest in his conduct. That is why Narendra did not think it necessary to be honest in fulfilling the condition. He had earned money through some doubtful means. But when he met Mahindra, he understood that the latter had taken great pains in earning the money in an honest way. He was overwhelmed. He had already been dishonest. He did not mind being a little more so in securing a boon for his loving brother. He took upon himself the consequence of what he was doing. That shows his nobility.”

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with corpse, gave him the slip.



## Information, please!

The phone at the information desk in the hospital rang and the nurse on duty picked it up. A courteous male voice asked, “Could you please tell me about the condition of Shyamlal in Room 808? He had had a heart operation.”

The nurse checked the file and replied, “The operation was successful, and he’s recovering well. He’ll be discharged in a couple of days. May I know who’s calling?”

The caller replied, “This is Shyamlal. These doctors never tell me anything!”





# Three wise replies

**T**he Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun-al Rashid, once went to call on a vizier who was ill. He was greeted at the door by the vizier's 12 year old son.

"Welcome to our humble abode," said the boy, "O Commander of the Faithful."

The Caliph was impressed with the boy's warmth and hospitality. After the Caliph had met the vizier and enquired after his health, the boy went up to him and said, "Do us the honour, O Caliph, and partake of some refreshments."

After the refreshments were served, the Caliph told the boy, "Come, sit by my side."

The boy sat beside him. The Caliph then showed him the diamond ring that he wore on his finger. "Tell me, young man," he said, "is there anything prettier or costlier than this diamond ring?"

"Your majesty," replied the boy, "the wearer of the

diamond is far more better looking and precious, too."

The Caliph laughed, pleased at the boy's reply.

"Now tell me truthfully," the Caliph spoke again, "do you like my magnificent palace better or your little house?"

The boy frowned thoughtfully. "Sire," he replied, "right now, I like my humble house better, for isn't it richer by your very presence?"

The Caliph smiled at his smart reply. "Now, let me ask one more question. Would you like to be the Caliph of Baghdad after me?"

"No, your majesty," replied the boy immediately. The Caliph, surprised, asked, "Why not?"

"Your sons are your rightful successors," replied the boy. "Who am I to desire that post? And I've no desire to deprive them of the throne."

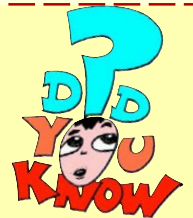
The Caliph said with a smile, "You're wise for your age. Your reward is a thousand Asharfi." The much pleased Caliph took his leave.

- By M.Q. Khan



The parachute was invented more than a hundred years before the aeroplane! It was designed in 1783 by a Frenchman, Louis Lenormand, to save those who had to jump out of burning buildings. In 1797 he gave a public exhibition of parachuting, jumping from a balloon 3,000ft above.

An 18<sup>th</sup> century Mayor of Grand Lemps, France, came up with an original and highly effective way of stopping the sale of alcoholic drinks. He issued an ordinance to the effect that anyone could walk out of a bar without paying for the drink he had consumed!







STORIES FROM MANY  
CULTURES

- A Legend from Romania

# The Prince who wanted to live forever

Once upon a time there was a king whom people called the Red King. His son, whose real name was Peter, was called the Red Prince. The Red Prince had just one aim in life. He wanted to live forever and never grow old. He knew that such a thing could not happen in his own kingdom where everyone grew old and eventually died. But he believed that he would find such a place some day if only he looked for it. "Father, please let me have my inheritance and a good horse," he told the Red King.

"Why do you want your inheritance now, my son? It will be all yours when I die," said the Red King.

"I cannot wait that long, father. I must find the place where people live forever."

"There is no such place, my son."

"I want to find that out myself," he said obstinately. The Red King gave the Red Prince the best horse in his stable and six large sacks of gold. It was far too heavy for him to carry. So, he carved a treasure chest and placed the six sacks of gold inside. Then he buried the chest beneath the city wall. He marked the place with his own name, PETER. Then he left his kingdom behind and went out into the world.

He rode night and day for eight long years until he came to a huge forest. It was full of tall trees with an extra large oak tree at the centre. In that oak tree lived a lovely green woodpecker. She was the queen of the forest. When she saw the Red Prince, she asked him what he wanted. "I'm looking for a kingdom where I shall never grow old or die."

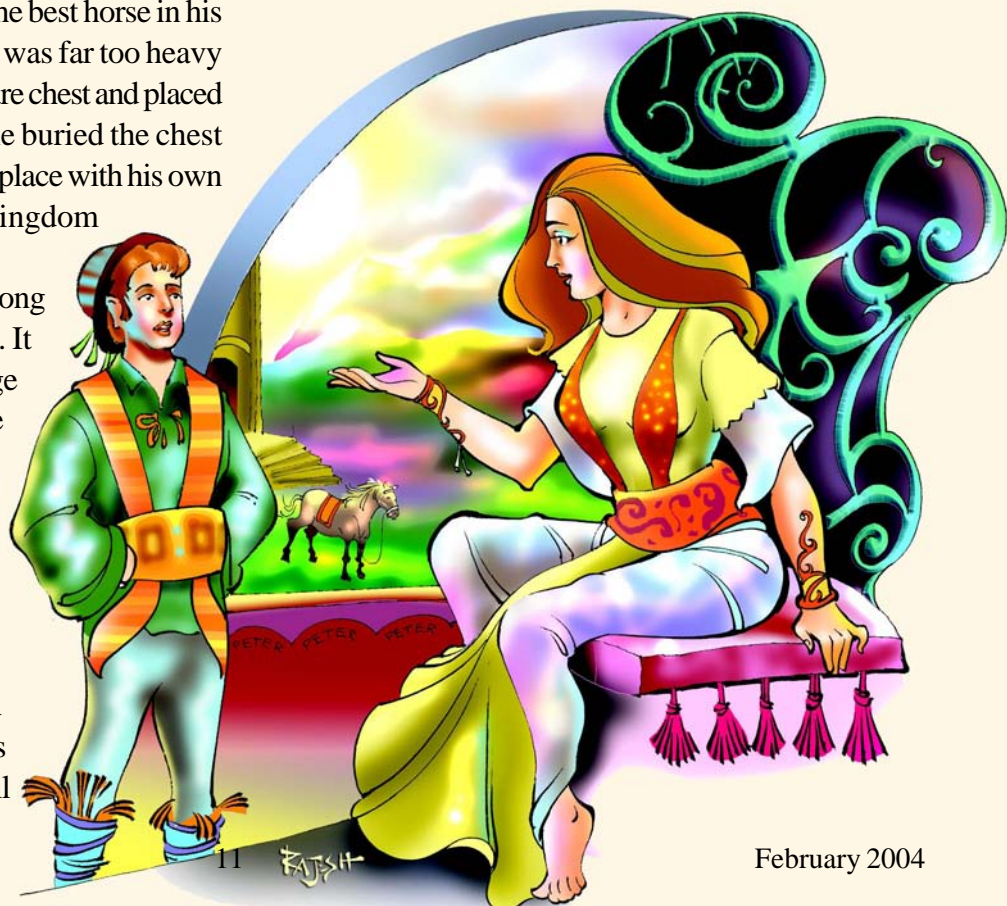
"You have found it, prince," said the woodpecker. "No one who lives in this forest shall grow old or die until

I have pecked the last bit of wood from the last tree. And you can see there are thousands!"

"But you will come to the last bit of wood some day," said the prince. "This is not the place for me." And he rode on ahead. He travelled for another eight years until he came to a kingdom amidst seven mountains. Each mountain had a colour of the rainbow and glowed in the sun. At the centre of the mountains stood a palace of copper. The palace belonged to the princess of the rainbow kingdom and she was more beautiful than the rainbow itself. The Red Prince entered the palace and found his name 'Peter' written in letters of gold all over the palace. "Can it really be my name that's written here?" he asked her, amazed.

"Of course", said the princess. "Just look around."

The Red Prince looked and found his portrait in every



frame. "But you don't know me! What can this mean?" he asked her.

"I've seen you in my mind's eyes and I've loved you ever since," said the princess. "Please marry me and stay with me." "I can't," said the Red Prince at once, "I want a place where I shall live forever and never grow old." "Then this is the right place. Neither you nor I shall grow old until the winds and the rain have worn off all these seven mountains and there is nothing left."

"But the rain and wind will wear them off some day," said the Red Prince. "It may not be today or tomorrow, but after a thousand and million tomorrows ..? No, I shall not risk it."

"Not even for the sake of my love?" asked the princess. "I'm not looking for love. I want eternal life and youth." The Red Prince travelled for eight more years and came to a place where two mountains stood side by side. One was made of gold and the other of silver. Between them was the garden of the Wind. The Red prince called out to the Wind. "I'm looking for a place where I can remain young and live forever," he said. "You blow all over the world. Tell me where I can find such a place."

"Right here," said the Wind. "Here you will never grow old or die. There are fruits in my garden and fish in my streams. If you want to hunt you can go to the Gold or Silver Mountain. But never enter the Valley of Regret which is just down below."

The Red Prince lived happily in the garden of the Wind. He ate the fruits in the garden, fished in the streams and hunted in the two mountains. Hundreds of years passed by. The Red Prince remained young, so did his horse. One day as he was hunting in the Mountain of Gold, he saw a beautiful deer. It ran so fast that he could hardly keep up with it. Before he realized it

the deer took him right within the Valley of Regret. All of a sudden a strange feeling gripped his heart. He felt desperately homesick.

All he wanted to do was to get back home, to his own country and people. He called out to the Wind. "I'm going back home." The wind merely laughed. "I knew you would, some day."

On his way back, he passed the land of the Rainbow Mountains. The mountains were worn off with rain and wind and the copper palace had crashed down. There was no trace of the princess. The forest had vanished too. "I must go home," cried the Red Prince. But when he reached there, there was no trace of his palace. There was nothing that he could recognize or a single person whom he knew. "Where is the kingdom of the Red King?" he asked the people.

"The Red King? That's only a legend!" they said.

"Of course, he is real!" cried the Red Prince. "I'm his son." The people burst out laughing. "Are you out of your mind? Or is it a joke?"

Then all of a sudden the Red Prince saw a part of the broken wall. It was where he had buried his treasure chest. He soon dug it out and found the sacks of gold that his father had given him. Then he saw two old women who sat on either side of his treasure chest.

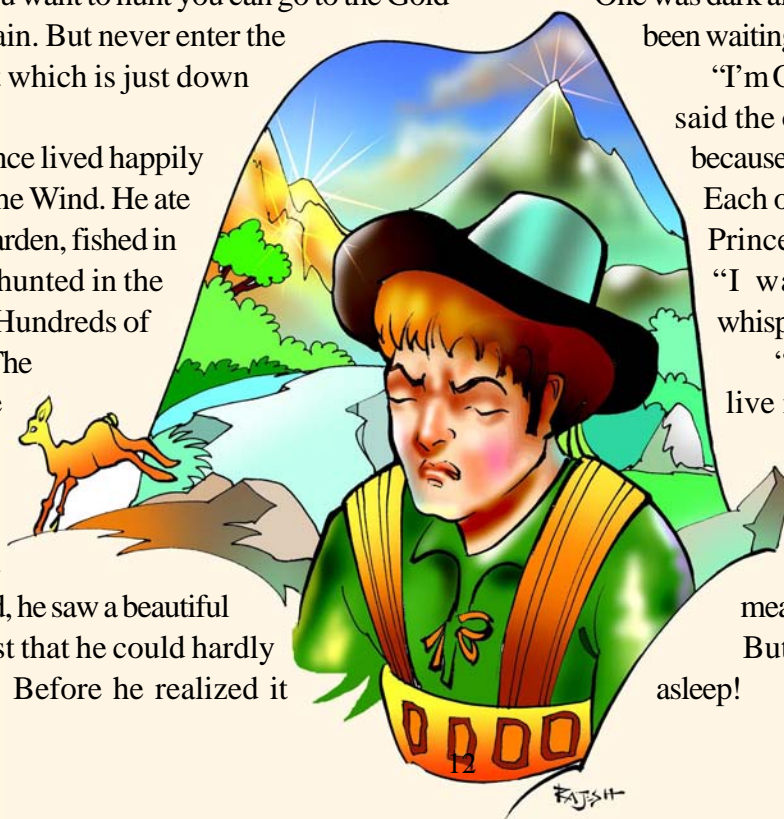
One was dark and the other was fair. "We have been waiting for you," they said together.

"I'm Old Age," said one. "I'm Death," said the other. "No one can escape us because we are part of human destiny." Each of them took a hand of the Red Prince as he sank into a deep sleep. "I wanted to live forever" he whispered.

"You foolish boy! How long you live is not important. What really matters is how you live. All great people live for others. Like your father did. Living forever does not necessarily mean being happy."

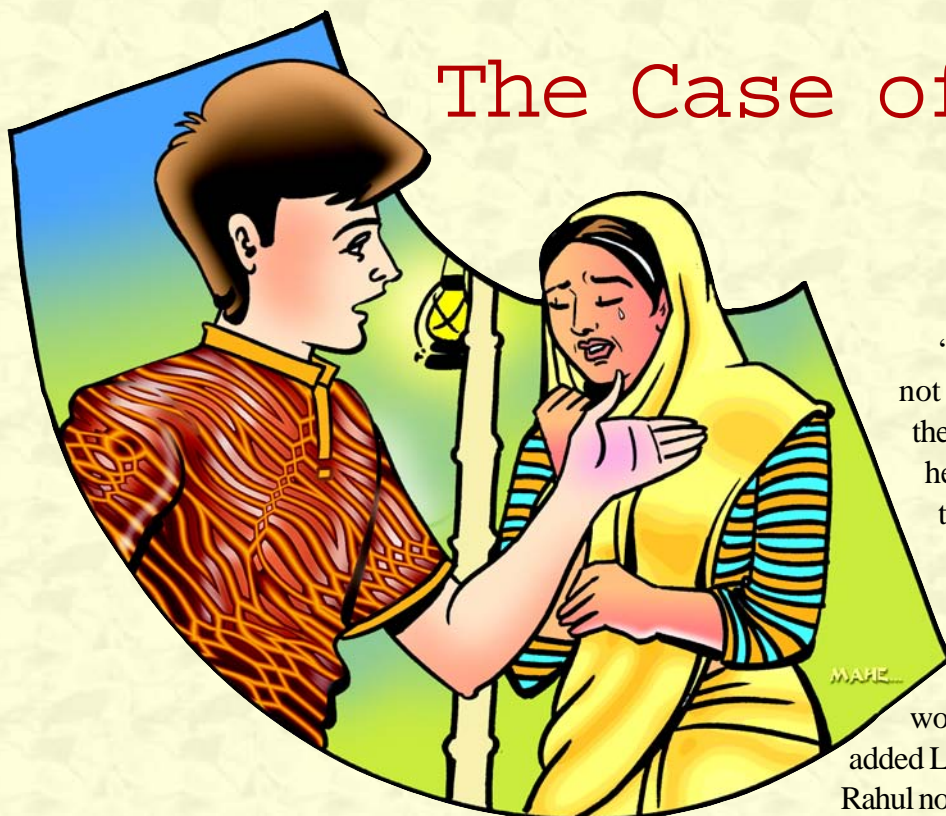
But the Red Prince was already asleep!

**- By Swapna Dutta**





# The Case of the Fake Medicines



“My neighbour’s daughter Rami is also not doing too well. She had diarrhoea and the doctor said the medicines would make her well in a day or two. But after taking the medicines, her condition has only worsened. What is the point in spending so much money on these tablets, I ask you?” she continued.

“Tell your mother I’m sorry I won’t be able to come tomorrow as well,” added Lata Bai, as she rushed off.

Rahul no longer felt like going for his music class though he usually enjoyed it very much. Instead, he decided to call on their family friend, Dr Ghosh, who lived nearby. ‘Uncle’ Ghosh was very fond of Rahul and always answered the boy’s never-ending questions patiently.

Luckily he found Dr Ghosh free. His last patient had just left and he was relaxing.

“Rahul! Come in. What’s bothering you?” Dr Ghosh asked smilingly as the little boy entered after knocking on the door.

However, soon a frown replaced Dr Ghosh’s smile as he heard the story of Billu, Rami and Preeti. “It is sometimes true that doctors are not able to diagnose the patient’s problem. I hope you know that you should always check the expiry date and verify the name of the medicine with that written in the prescription. Also, the correct dosage is very important,” Dr Ghosh said.

Rahul nodded his head. But Dr Ghosh’s next sentence made him sit up sharply! “There are also a lot of spurious or fake drugs in the market these days. They are very dangerous and can cause more harm than good,” he said.

“Eh...that’s the bell. I think it’s Mr. Sharma. Now, run along, Rahul, I’ve a caller. Don’t worry so much. I’m

Rahul was taking his dog, Bhollu, for a walk one bright, sunny Sunday morning when he met Uncle Pritam who was looking very sad. Rahul was a clever 14-year-old boy always ready to help others. “Good morning, Uncle! Is anything wrong?” asked Rahul.

“My daughter Preeti was admitted to hospital yesterday. I’m on my way there. She has been suffering from typhoid for the last ten days. The medicines the doctor prescribed haven’t worked and her condition has taken a turn for the worse,” Uncle Pritam explained to Rahul.

The next day while going for his music class after school, Rahul bumped into Lata Bai, the maid who came to help his mother every day. Lata Bai apparently had been crying and her eyes were red and face swollen.

“Why’re you crying, Lata *mausi*?” asked Rahul. “*Arre beta*, what can I say? My son Billu has been running high temperature for the last ten days. I went to the doctor, spent a small fortune on medicines, but to what use? Billu has become so weak that he can’t even get up from bed. The doctor says the medicines didn’t work and my boy has to be taken to hospital now,” she said rubbing her eyes with her the *pallu* of her sari.



sure those children will soon be all right,” Dr Ghosh said as he got up to open the door.

“What if Rami, Billu and Preeti have all been given fake medicines? No wonder they are not getting well,” Rahul thought as he slipped out of the door.

Rahul’s curiosity was aroused. He went to Uncle Pritam’s house. Next he visited Lata Bai and also her neighbour’s house. His guess was correct! The medicines had indeed been bought from the same chemist shop ‘The Town Medicos’ in Babu Lal Market! “Is it possible that they were spurious?” he wondered.

Someone slapped him on the back and he turned around in surprise. It was his friend, Kartik, back from Kuwait where he had gone to visit his uncle.

“Hi Kartik! It’s really wonderful to see you here,” Rahul said with a big smile.

“What were you mumbling just now? You looked as if you were walking in a daze!” Kartik said putting an arm across Rahul’s shoulder. Rahul decided to confide in his friend. Two brains are always better than one, he thought.

Kartik listened wide-

eyed to the whole story. “I think you might have stumbled upon something. It’s really a coincidence. You know there was a conference in Kuwait on the growing menace of spurious drugs. My uncle had attended it. That’s how I came to know about it. Do you know it is considered a very serious offence in Kuwait and UAE? They even have the death sentence for people who sell or make fake drugs,” Kartik said.

Rahul and Kartik decided to investigate the matter. The next day after school, the two boys walked down to the Wellington Hospital, the biggest in their small town. The two boys were walking up and down the street facing the hospital, wondering how to proceed, when they spotted Ramu, their school gardener, sitting near the gate. Ramu was clearly very upset.

“What has happened, Ramu *bhaiyya*? Are you ill?” asked Kartik.

“Not me, it’s my younger brother, Raju. The doctors just said that he has slipped into a coma. He had high fever for the last three days. These medicines were of no use and see what has happened now. What shall I do now?” Ramu said, bursting into great sobs.

“From where did you buy them?” Rahul and Kartik both asked at once.

“Why, from ‘The Town Medicos’. The one in Babu Lal Market,” Ramu said.

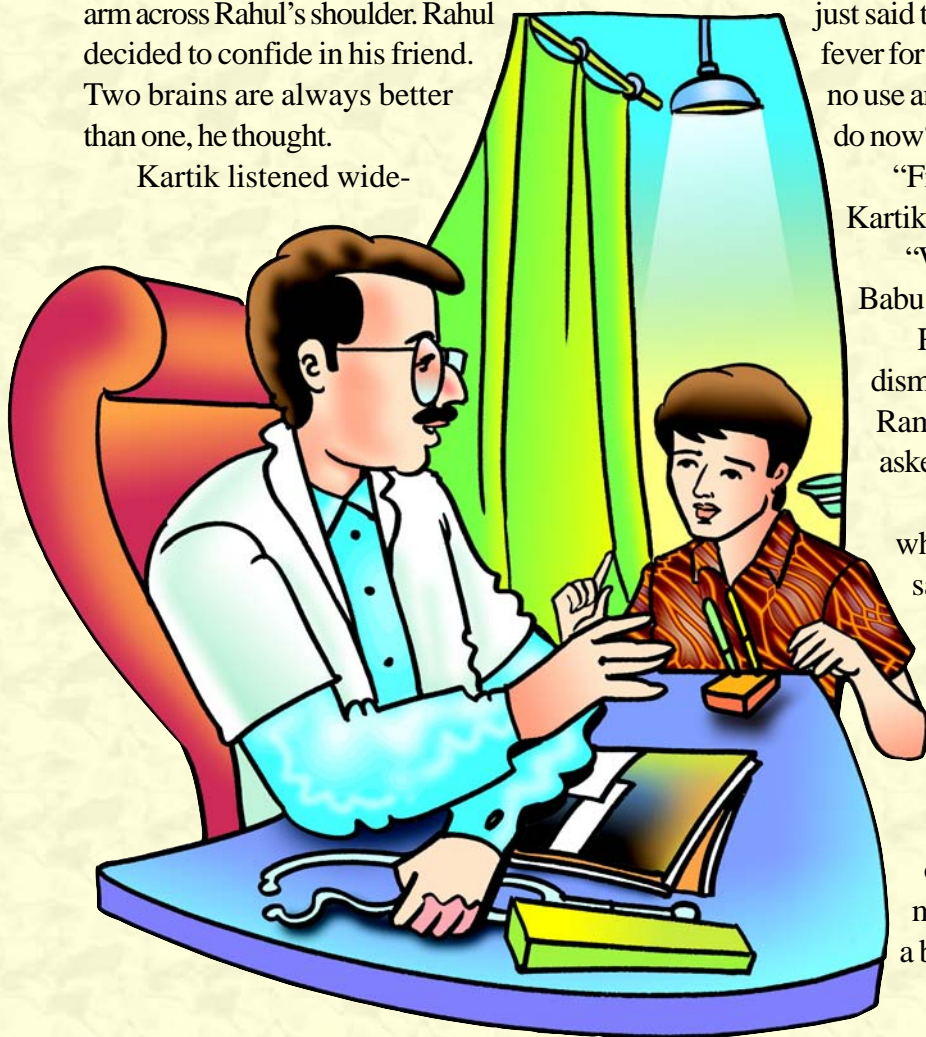
Rahul and Kartik looked at each other in dismay. “Do you have the prescription with you, Ramu *bhaiyya*? Can you give it to me?” Kartik asked eagerly.

“Here you are. But do return it though of what use it is now, I don’t know,” said Ramu sadly. Kartik nudged Rahul and whispered, “Come with me! I’ve a hunch. Let’s go to the chemist.”

“You have to pay Rs. 256.40. Do you have the money with you?” the shopkeeper asked putting the medicines in a paper bag.

The boys looked at each other. “We’ve only Rs 50 with us now. Give us just one medicine then,” Kartik said. “And could I have a bill, please?” Kartik asked.

“You have to pay another Rs 26 if you want





a bill. And why do you need a bill? Now, run along,” the shopkeeper said turning back to put away the rest of the medicines.

Night had fallen by then. Rahul and Kartik rushed straight to Dr Ghosh’s house. Dr Ghosh took out one of the tablets, sniffed at it and then crushed it between his fingers.

“I can’t swear to it but I’m pretty sure there’s something wrong here! I shall get these tested at once. Smart work, boys!” he said.

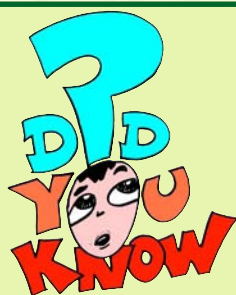
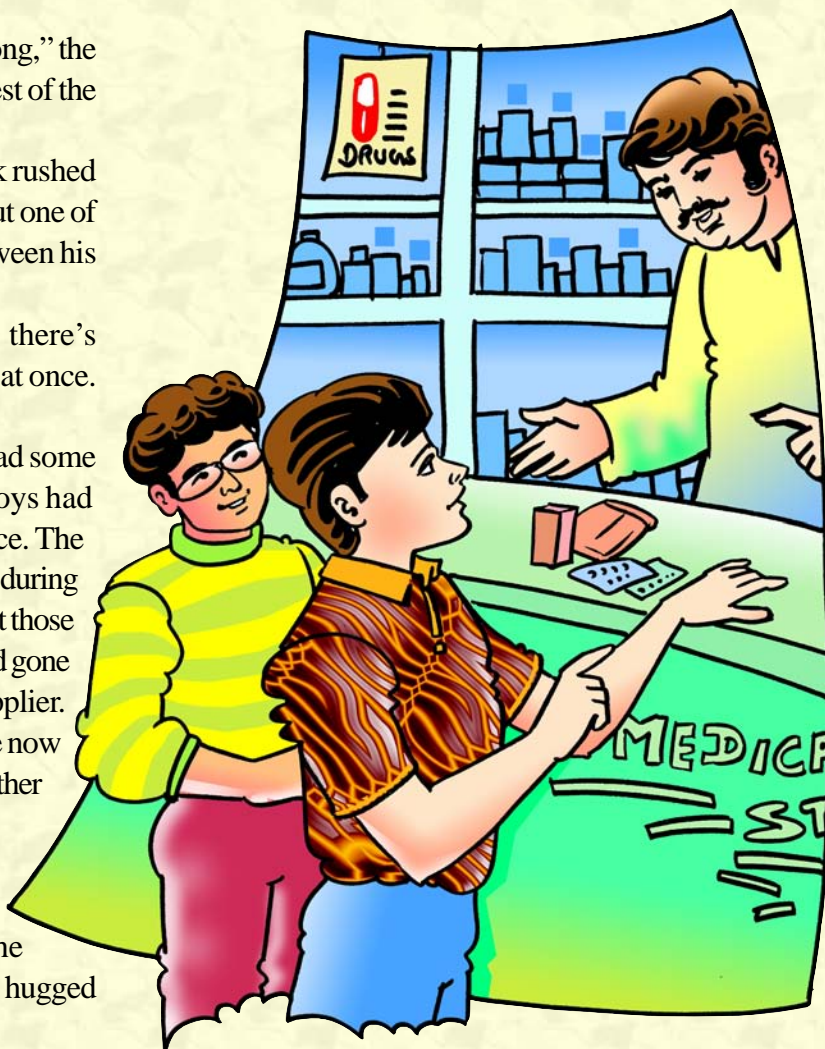
The next day at breakfast Rahul’s father had some good news for the boys. “The chemist you boys had gone to yesterday has been arrested by the police. The entire batch of medicines that he had been selling during the last month was fake. Just imagine that! He got those medicines at a lesser price from someone who had gone to him, instead of getting it from his regular supplier. See, where his greed has led him! The police are now after the fellow who sold those drugs,” Rahul’s father said.

“It was very smart detective work by you two boys. I’m very pleased with you. I think I shall get the tickets for the football match at the stadium for you and Kartik,” he added as Rahul hugged him.

Rami, Billu and Preeti soon recovered at the hospital. Ramu’s brother was also getting well though it might take him some time to get back on his feet. Almost everyone had heard about their role in getting the culprits caught

and they were heroes indeed! And the next day saw two very excited boys at the stadium watching the football match and having the time of their lives!!

**-Debasree Bhattacharjee**



The White House in Washington D.C was originally grey - the colour of the sandstone it was made of. Following a war in 1812 when it was burned by enemy troops, its outside walls were painted white to hide the smoke stains.



Human beings aren't the only ones to build eaves over their houses to deflect rain-water. Some species of termites do so, too! In rainy climates, some breeds of termites attach special overhanging eaves to their nests, which deflect downpours and keep the nests dry.





# By the sweat of one's brow

**T**his is the story of a brahmin who would not accept anything belonging to the royal treasury, but would take only something that the king had earned for himself in the hard way.

The king was of charitable disposition and he never sent back anybody who went to him for succour. Not to speak of the rewards he handed and awards he distributed to all those who he thought deserved them. Not to speak also of the food and clothes he stuffed the bags with which his poor subjects brought with them.

It was the New Year day once and, at the end of the celebrations, his subjects queued up to be the beneficiaries of his generosity and benevolence. Not one went away disappointed. When everybody had left, the king saw a brahmin, looking not very prosperous nor steeped in poverty, patiently waiting for his turn and there was nobody else to receive a gift from the kind-hearted king. There was still a pile of gifts yet to be distributed.

The brahmin slowly went forward and the king asked: "Tell me, panditji, what shall I give you? Clothes? Food? Or a pearl necklace?"

"None of them, your majesty, because the royal treasury is what the people had given you," said the brahmin with all humility. "Is there anything that you, O King, have earned yourself by the sweat of your brow? I shall accept that and only that."



The king was really taken aback. He did not, even for a moment, consider that the man was being audacious. However, he thought that there was some truth in what the brahmin said. He looked at the pile of gifts lying around. Not one of them had been bought with his hard-earned money.

He had only utilised the wealth in his treasury which contained monies paid by the people as taxes. "Panditji, there is nothing which I can claim that I have paid for from my personal wealth. I still offer you anything that you see in front of you. You don't have to feel bad about it, because it will go to you with my respect for and recognition of your erudition and knowledge that you

have acquired. Just name it, and you shall have it."

The brahmin did not think twice before he replied: "No, your majesty, I shall not touch any of them. I shall accept only what is just and rightful." The brahmin shuffled his feet as if he was about to go away.

The king thought that if he allowed the man to go empty-handed on such a joyous occasion, it would mean a shame to him. He decided that he would strive his best to please the brahmin, but he would need time to do so. "All right, panditji, please come back tomorrow

and I shall give you whatever I shall earn the hard way.”

The brahmin bowed low and went away, a smile on his lips. The king remained seated on his throne for a while and repaired to his chambers only to come out dressed in shabby clothes. He set out on foot and unaccompanied in search of work. He tried to find whether there was any labour that he could undertake and earn some money. Alas! Nobody could offer him any work.

At last he reached the seashore where some fisherfolk were getting ready to cast their nets. After he extended help in fishing and they had rejected his offer, he went to a fisherman and pleaded with him. He took pity on the king—who was of course dressed in rags—and told him: “Would you agree to accepting one copper coin for a big fish and a cowrie for a small?”

The king had no choice except to accept the conditions and took hold of the net, waded for some distance into the sea and cast the net. He stood there for a long time and drew the net. Fortunately he saw that there was a big fish as well as a small one. He knew that he had no experience in fishing and even if he were to spend the whole night, he would not make a better catch. So, he went back to the fisherman who was waiting for him. He smiled at the king and handed a copper coin and a cowrie that he had promised.

The king thanked him and returned to the palace and got in unnoticed by any of the guards who were relaxing after a whole night’s vigil. When the court assembled, the king saw the brahmin waiting to be called in.

“Panditji, I worked hard last night and earned a copper coin and a cowrie for my labour. You can have them, but I still offer anything that you may wish to have from my treasury. Please don’t hesitate,” said the king in all humility.

“No, your majesty, I don’t wish to take any of them as they rightfully belong to the people,” responded the

brahmin, “but I shall gladly accept whatever you have earned by your sweat and toil. Could I have the copper coin and the cowrie?”

The king soon pulled them out of his robes and handed them to the brahmin who profusely thanked the king. “You’ve earned them with sincere labour and so they are very precious to me.” With great satisfaction writ large on his face, the brahmin turned round and proceeded home.

His wife was eagerly waiting for his return from the palace where he had gone a second time in two days. She was expecting him to come back with some valuable gifts besides a lot of money. “What have you brought, my dear husband?” she asked him, with great expectation as she saw him smiling.

“Something very valuable, I should say,” said the brahmin, adding, “something which nobody in this kingdom would have ever received from the king!”





"Show me, please," the woman pleaded, as she saw his open palms.

The brahmin pulled out the copper coin and cowrie from the folds of his shawl and placed them on her palms. "This is the king's own earnings, his hard-earned wealth, something more precious than the jewels or the precious stones or the gold coins in his treasury, but all of them he had only received from the people and not earned by him out of hard labour. That is the difference!"

"Pah!" the brahmin's wife exclaimed. "Who wants a copper coin and a mere cowrie? And you call them precious! What has become of you?" She threw them out and they landed on the open court yard in front of their modest looking house.

The brahmin kept quiet as he did not want to pick a quarrel with his wife. He coolly went about attending to the daily chores, while the woman busied herself in

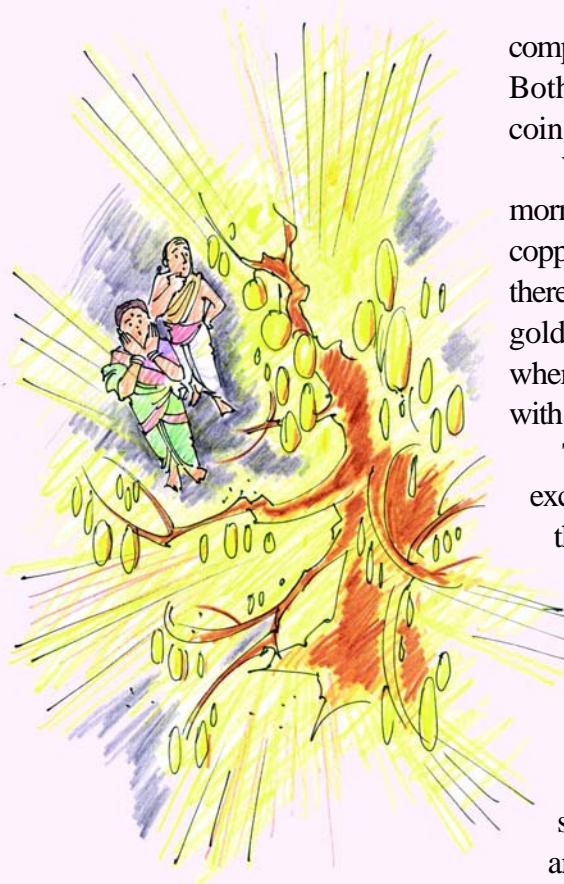
completing her own chores in the house. Both of them soon forgot the copper coin and the cowrie and went to bed.

When they woke up the next morning, what did they see? Where the copper coin had fallen in the courtyard, there stood a golden tree on which were golden coins hanging like fruits. And where the cowrie fell was a silver plant with silver cowries all over its branches.

They both were happy as they excitedly began plucking the coins and the cowries. The brahmin went and exchanged them for money from a goldsmith and a jeweller. "I told you that nobody had received such a gift from the king till now," said the brahmin, as he listened to his wife's apologies, "I'm sorry I despised the copper coin and the cowrie."

The brahmin and his wife from then on did not feel any want for anything and they became a wealthy couple in course of time. They led a happy and contented life.

(Retold by R.K.)



## Tall tales

Two anglers, Vinod and Suresh, were comparing notes about their fishing prowess, and each, as usual, was trying to outdo the other.

"You're not going to believe this, Suresh," said Vinod, "but only yesterday, I caught the biggest fish ever seen in these waters! I took it home and weighed it, and it tipped the scales at thirty-five kilos!"

"Oh, that's nothing, Vinod," said Suresh carelessly. "The other day, while fishing, I pulled up my line and what did I find but a ship's lamp! I lifted it up and examined it, and it had the date engraved on the bottom - 1905. And would you believe it - *inside the lamp was a light, which was still burning!*"

Vinod stared impassively at Suresh for a few seconds. Then his face broke into a grin. "Tell you what, Suresh," he said. "Let's compromise - I'll knock thirty kilos off my fish if you'll blow out your light!"





# Tongue in cheek

I spot the slight bulge on the left cheek of my sister Raji, a sweet little girl, two years younger to me. She is a bundle of mischief and often plays her tricks on me. I have told her a dozen times to leave me out, to aim her dirty tricks on her friends. I have even held her down and warned her that I would beat her, black and blue . . . I learnt that idiom a few days back from my teacher. I now know that the two colours that go with a severe beating are Black and Blue. Not Green which goes with envy; not Grey which marks a depressed mood; not Yellow which reflects cowardice; not Red which indicates anger . . . But my threats have all fallen on deaf ears.

That is another thing about Raji. She knows when to turn her ears deaf. How she manages it is something of a mystery to me.

I spot the bulging cheek and rush to her side to find out what lies behind the bulge. Is she holding a round toffee or some other delicacy, tucked between the roof of the mouth and the tongue, letting the sweet taste trickle through and tickle her taste buds? Or is the bulge the outward sign of a deep-rooted malady sent out by a tooth that is in a poor state of health?

It turns out that on both counts, I am way off the mark.

The bulge is caused by Raji's tongue pressing on the inner layer of the cheek, pushing the cheek out firmly, shaping it, lending to it the bulge that looks totally out of place.

I tell her she has no business to do that. "Hi, you girl, if you do that too often, the left cheek may get a permanent bulge and then you will lose the balance between the cheeks. Your left cheek will be permanently swollen, while the right cheek will be flat. The cheeks will look differently shaped. That will make you look ugly. And, then. . ." I pause, remember the many stories Ma has told us in which princes go after beautiful girls, not ugly ones, adding, "Nobody shall marry you."

"How silly you are, *Bhaiyya!* Who told you I am in



a hurry to marry?" she puts on a look of perfect innocence that an eight-year-old manages more easily than a ten-year-old and then continues, "If I can shape the left cheek to get a bulge, can't I shape the right cheek too and make the two cheeks well matched?"

"Do that and you'll earn the nick name, *Puffed Cheek*," I scowl, just for a second. Then I sense the humour in her truly tongue-in-cheek response and burst into laughter. She too laughs. In the process, her tongue gets back to its resting place at the base of the mouth and the bulge on her left cheek vanishes in a trice.

But her tongue can never be at rest. Wagging the tongue comes to her naturally. She puts her tongue out at me, teasingly, while her eyes light up with impish delight.

"Shall I clip off the tip of your tongue?" I hold out a threat.

"Not before we hold a contest. I know why you want to chip off the tip of my tongue. *Bhaiyya*, I can touch the tip of my nose with the tip of my tongue. You can't do that. But, remember, come anywhere near my tongue with a clipper; and I shall run for cover. I shall go to Ma or Dad. And you will run off, with your tail between your legs," Raji is sure of herself.

"Mind your words," I roll my eyes angrily.

"Listen, *Bhaiyya*, I can touch my nose with my tongue. Can you do that?" she displays her skill even



before I accept her challenge and then waits for me to prove my skill in this game that, alas, finds no place even in local tournaments, what to talk of the Olympics.

I decide to humour her, but despite my best efforts, there is an unbridgeable gap of about a quarter of a centimetre between the tips of my nose and my tongue.

“Bhaiyya, I’m the champion. Alas, you aren’t even a runner up. For I just held a similar contest with Ma and Dad. Ma could get the tip of her tongue reach almost up to the nose, leaving a gap of less than one millimetre below the tip of the tongue. Dad left a gap of about two millimetres. You, Bhaiyya, have a wider gap,” she says.

“I’ve miles to go and years of training sessions before I win,” I had just been taught a poem of Robert Frost

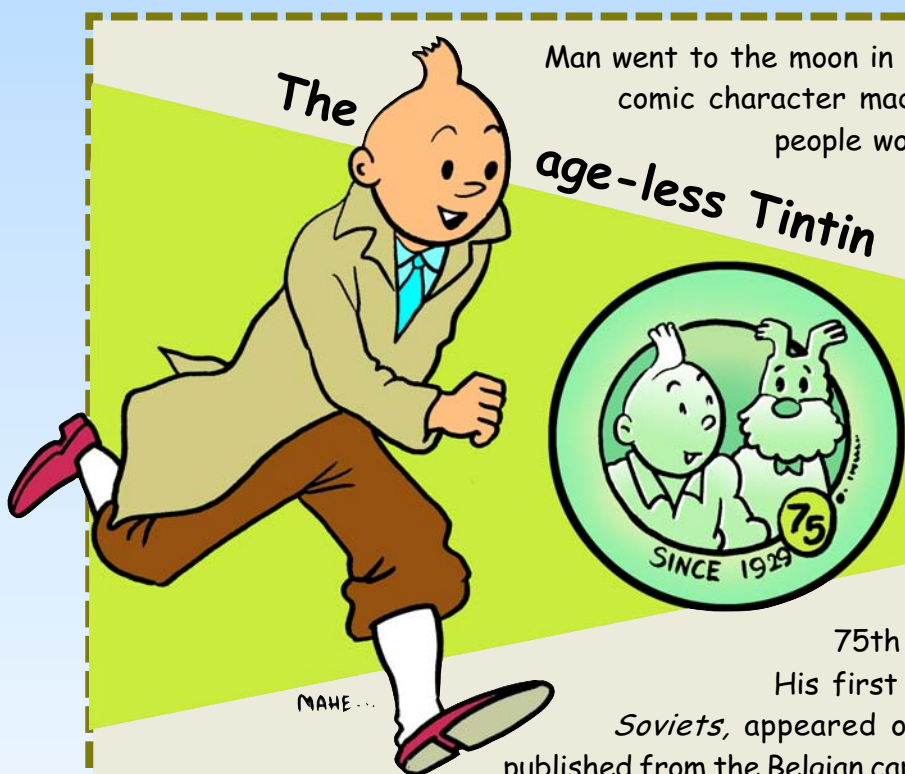
and produce a parody of the song.

“You may do that, all your life. Still you shall never win. Not when I am around. You may, at best, hope to push yourself closer to the second position. But I don’t hold out much hope on that count either. Not when Ma and Dad are around. They are unlikely to sit and watch and let you overtake them in this contest,” Raji’s eyes sparkle with mischief.

“You imp!” I raise my hand, feigning anger, enacting the possibility of delivering a slap.

“Oh, Bhaiyya, you can’t win a prize for acting, either,” Raji puts her tongue out, teases me and runs off, with me hot on the chase, right behind her.

- By R.K. Murthi



Man went to the moon in 1969. Fifteen years earlier, a popular comic character made a journey to the moon. How many people would remember this adventure of that lovable cub-reporter called TINTIN? He is not a regular employee of any newspaper, but at the end of each of his adventures, he 'files a report' and this appears in a newspaper.

But that is only part of the story. In reality, Tintin appears in comics drawn by Herge in newspapers all over the world. On January 10, Tintin celebrated his 75th birth anniversary.

His first adventure, *Tintin in the Land of the Soviets*, appeared on January 10, 1929 in a newspaper published from the Belgian capital, Brussels. Since then, 23 complete adventures have seen the light of the day.

Herge (real name Georges Remi) passed away in 1983, leaving several stories unfinished. Unfortunately, unlike Mickey Mouse and his friends and foes, who were created by Walt Disney and who can be re-created by illustrators working for the company established by Disney, Tintin cannot be drawn by anybody other than his creator, Herge.

Tintin, who is always accompanied by his dog, Snowy, and helped by Captain Haddock and the eccentric Professor Calculus, have been involved in international crises and fights with drug peddlars, spies, guerillas and other evil characters. The government of Belgium has honoured Tintin and Snowy by issuing silver coins valued 10 euros.



# The City Forest

Chattur, the two year old jackal, was very excited. Today was his first day in school. His twin-sister Chalaki, too, was going with him. Chattur and Chalaki lived with their parents, and their den was surrounded by lush green forest comprising mostly Kikkar trees.

Their school was a clearing under the banyan tree located near the Bistadari Monument, a hunting lodge during the Mughul times. Their teacher Spotty, a wise spotted owl, lived in a hole in the banyan tree.

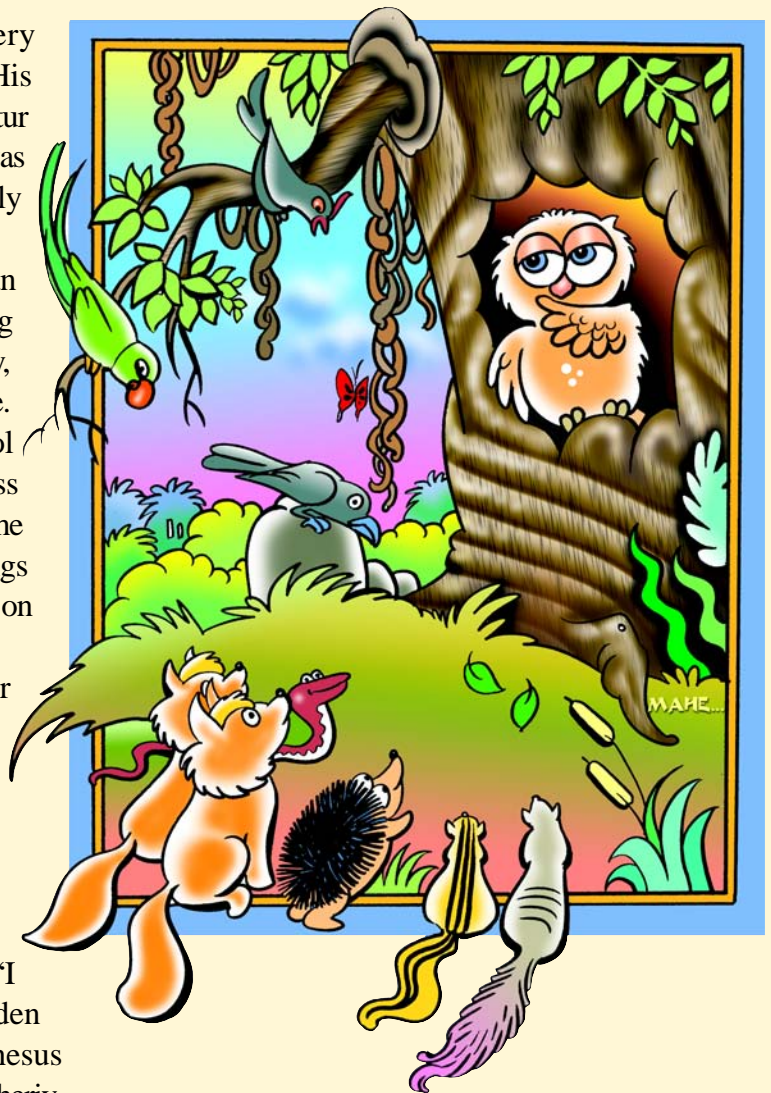
Soon Chalaki and Chattur reached the school and found their seats. Other students of their class also joined them. They all lived in the forest along the Delhi Ridge. Suddenly there was a flutter of wings and their teacher came down from his hole and sat on a high pedestal in front of them.

“Good morning, children! I am spotty, your teacher,” he introduced himself to the students. “Well, children, let’s have a quick round of introduction, one by one.” Nila was the first one to start, “I am Nila, the nilgai”.... “I am Kowha, the crow”... “I am Chalaki, the jackal”.... “I am Totaram, the rose ringed parakeet”... “I am Pricky, the porcupine”... “I am Tooktok, the barbet”... “I am Chattur, the jackal”... “I am Sona, the golden oriole”... “I am Koel”... “I am Chintu, the rhesus macaque”... “I am Morni, the peahen”... “I am Gilheriy, the squirrel”.... “I am Slimy, the rat snake”... “I am Nevla, the mongoose”.

“Thank you, children. The first lesson you must learn is about your own home,” informed Spotty.

Koel looked at Morni and whispered, “Don’t we know our homes?” “I thought school was fun and game. But this is getting a bit boring.”

Morni was a restless child and she was looking for the first opportunity to slip away from the class. She was happy that she found someone like Koel who was equally impatient. “I’m so happy we’re in the same class,” said

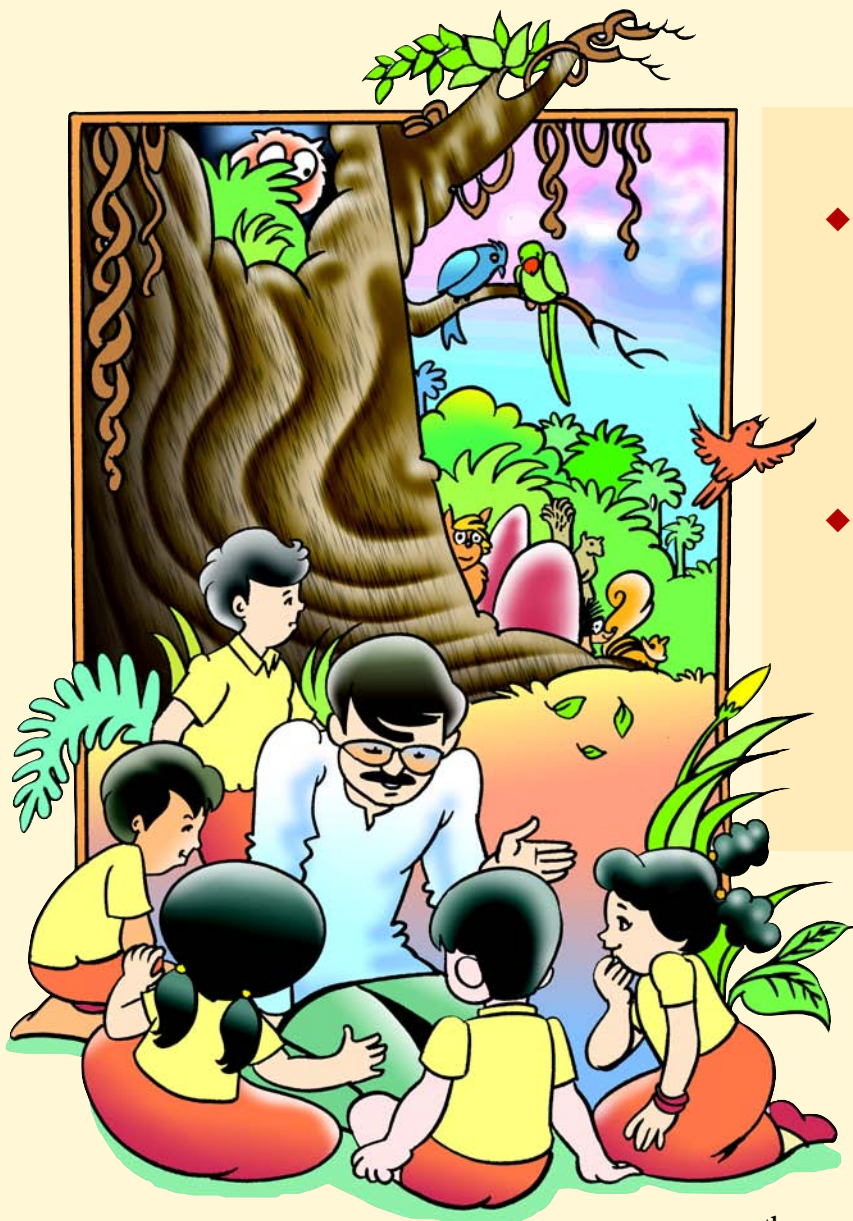


Koel. “Let’s wait and hear what this old man has to say. If it is good for nothing, then we’ll slowly slip away.”

“Children! Do you know that we all live in Delhi Ridge?” informed Spotty. In one chorus, all the students said, “Delhi Ridge? What is it?”

“Delhi Ridge is part of the Aravallis, which are the oldest mountain range in India, originating in Gujarat and culminating in Delhi,” informed Spotty. “Records show that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Emperor Feroz Shah Tuglaq afforested the Delhi Ridge and during the British rule, the Britishers planted around 3,000 Neem and





## The Delhi Ridge

- ◆ *The Gazetteer of Delhi* (1976) has listed 30 species of mammals, roughly 200 species of birds, 14 species of reptiles, 20 species of amphibians and about 200 species of butterflies from Delhi. Most of these are found in Delhi Ridge.
- ◆ Delhi Ridge has played a historical role, too. Even today, a number of monuments of historical importance lay nestled in various parts of the Ridge and includes the Flagstaff Tower, Chauburji-Masjid, Kushk-i-shikar (Pir-Ghaib), Ajitgarh or Mutiny Memorial, and Bhuli Bhatiyari-Ka-Mahal.

Babool trees. “Due to exhaustive development, the Ridge has now been reduced to patches. Today, the total area of the Ridge is approximately 7,728 hectares and it has been divided into four zones—the Northern Ridge, the Central Ridge called Dhaula Kuan, the Southern Central Ridge called Vasant Kunj and the Southern Ridge which is the Asola Wild Life Sanctuary. These four parts are surrounded by concrete jungles where human beings live,” said Spotty.

It was Totaram’s turn to speak. “Sir! Humans are crazy, they not only live in concrete jungles but use so many vehicles which are so noisy and let out so much smoke.”

“But in the Ridge, you cannot hear their blaring horns. Do you know why?” asked Spotty.

“Sir, I’ve heard from my father that the trees around us act as sound insulators and keep the noise away,” said Chalaki.

“Very good!” exclaimed Spotty. “Not only do they act as sound insulators, but help in keeping the temperature low and acts as a barrier to dust storms,” added Spotty.

Suddenly Totaram cried loudly and flew to the nearest tree. Seeing him others, too, ran helter skelter and hid behind trees, bushes and rocks. Spotty was totally surprised and taken back by the commotion. In a few minutes he heard some noises. As he listened carefully, he guessed that they were of human beings and they were coming towards their school. He, too, quietly flew and sat near his hole.

In a few minutes, a young man and some school kids came and sat under the banyan tree. Spotty had seen the young man before and knew that he was Nayan, a regular visitor to the Ridge.

Nayan addressed the children. “Friends, let’s sit here for some time. Can you see this shrub?” he said pointing to a small plant. “This is Adusa or *Athathoda vasica*. It has medicinal properties and is used for making cough syrup. There are many such plants in the Ridge which



have some economic value or other.” When Nayan was talking to the children, the young animals were also listening to him from their hiding places.

“In this Nature walk today, you’ve seen a number of plants and birds,” Nayan continued. “But the sad part is that if we don’t save the Delhi Ridge, all this will be lost for ever. These trees and plants around you are not only part of a forest, but they act as a sponge and absorb all the water during the monsoon.

“Later, during the lean period they slowly recharge the water bodies in the Ridge. These water bodies not only provide water to the Ridge but recharge the ground water table which enables us to get water throughout the year,” said Nayan. “Everything in nature is interlinked and man is part of this link. If one of the links breaks, the entire web will collapse, so we will,” concluded Nayan. After sometime Nayan and the children got up and continued their walk.

Slowly, all the animal students gathered around Spotty, who had by then returned to his pedestal.

“Sir, we heard Nayan talking about these forests and saving it. Can you please tell us more about it,” asked Pricky.

“You see, the Delhi Ridge is on prime land and a few

selfish human beings have always eyed it for development,” said Spotty.

“The forest you see today has survived because of long battles fought by a few concerned citizens. Many years ago, a group of college students got together to save the Delhi Ridge forest from encroachments and destruction. During one of the struggles,” Spotty continued, “these well-wishers felt that if the Delhi Ridge has to be saved, then it should get some protection and they took up the matter with various authorities, including the Supreme Court of India. Finally, in 1996, the Delhi Ridge was declared a reserved forest. Today, we must thank our human friends for saving our homes,” concluded Spotty.

It was already late in the afternoon and time for school to close. As the students were leaving for their homes, Koel looked at Morni and said, “School is not just fun and games, but a learning centre. I’m glad that I stayed till the end and I look forward to the lessons tomorrow.” Morni could not help but agree with her before flying off home.

**- By Radha Kamat**

***Courtesy: Kalpavriksh and the National Biodiversity and Strategic Action Plan***

## Authorship uncertain!

I know that you know that I know. Krishna awoke early one morning to find that someone had slipped a postcard under his door. The card informed him that he was an imbecile, a fool, and a senile old idiot.

The evaluation did not agree with Krishna’s opinion of himself. Guessing that the handwriting resembled that of Shyam, a friend who enjoyed a practical joke, he confronted the man that very afternoon.

“Did you send me this infamous libel?” asked Krishna.

“No, I didn’t,” replied Shyam.

“Then who else could it be?”

“Look here,” replied Shyam, “I’m not the only one who knows you!”



# Newsflash



## Good-bye to school bags

**A** popular TV jingle shows the back of three little children on their way to school. Their bags had labels reading LKG, UKG, and 5 KG — the last probably the weight of the books inside the bag. Even our Parliament had discussed the issue

whether children need to carry so many books to school every day. The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, a government set-up which runs what are called Central Schools all over the country, has taken the lead to “reduce the burden” imposed on children. To start with, children in Classes I and II will not in future be carrying books to school. All their text books and notebooks will remain in the school itself and will not be taken home in the evening or for week end study. For that matter, the children will not be given any home work and will be free to spend their leisure time as they like — playing, reading books, watching TV or pursuing any hobby like gardening. The decision was taken after months of research and scientific study. The Sangathan proposes to bring more classes under the new scheme in the years to come.

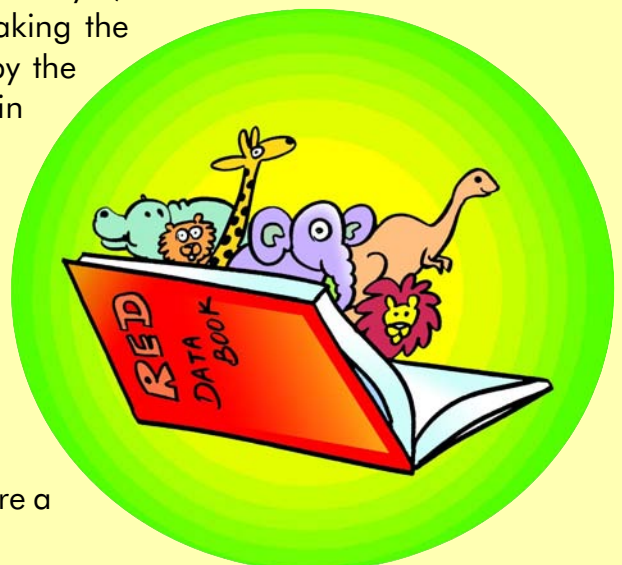
## Facing threat of extinction

**T**he latest Red List in the Red Data Book has added nearly 2,000 living beings in the world as facing extinction, taking the total to 12,259. This list is prepared and released by the World Conservation Union headquartered in Yand in Switzerland.

The Data book says that some 762 animals, birds, reptiles and insects have disappeared from the earth between A.D. 1500 and now.

Nearly 60 living beings can now be seen only in zoos or sanctuaries. Galapagos, Seychelles, and Hawaii are among the few places where some 85 rare species of plants and animals can be seen.

India has been included in the list of countries where a large number of birds face a threat of extinction.





## A record claim against Guinness

**S**aloo Choudhury of Kolkata and wife Nina have asked the publishers of the *Guinness Book* to pay them damages totalling Rs.166 crore. The husband-wife team had created a world record in 1989 by going round the world in their car in 69 days. A year later, a team of the British army broke that record. In 1991, the Choudhuries went round six continents in 39 days 20 hrs. 15 minutes. As this was not accepted as a record, Mr. Choudhury sought Rs.36 crore as damages from *Guinness*, which promised to hold a 'millennium challenge' in 2000. The Indian adventurer then even announced a "Choudhury Trophy" for the winner. The contest was not held, nor was the Choudhuries' record of 1991 given an entry in the 2001 edition of the *Book of Records*.



## A click by 1,000 cameras

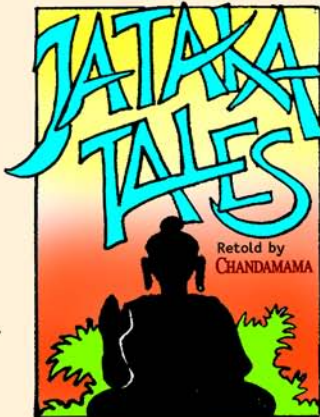
**T**he All Kerala Photographers Association held its convention in Trivandrum, the Kerala capital, in August, to mark World Photography Day, when a 'Magna Carta' of their rights was officially recognised in the presence of ministers, MLAs, and other dignitaries. The historic event was captured in film by more than a thousand photographers from all over India. This is considered a world record, to have so many cameras click at one and the same time. The Association is seeking an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

## Alma mater his beneficiary

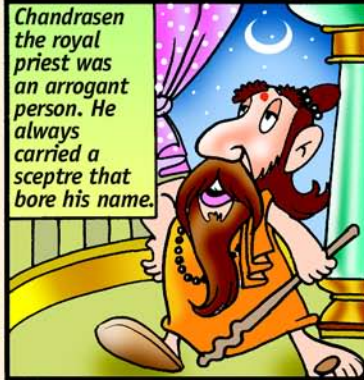
**S**ome 30 years ago, Dr. Prabhu Goel, took his degree from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur. He returned to his alma mater recently to make an endowment worth \$ 1,000,000 for research and development. In the intervening period, he had gone to the USA, taken his doctorate, and headed a network security company in California, which invented a solution to a problem that brought in riches. Dr. Goel wanted something similar to happen in India, and thought of the best way to pay back his debt of gratitude to the Kanpur Institute which, with the help of the endowment, could do some wonders to help the nation.







Chandrasen the royal priest was an arrogant person. He always carried a sceptre that bore his name.



One day he was driving his carriage on a narrow and deserted road.

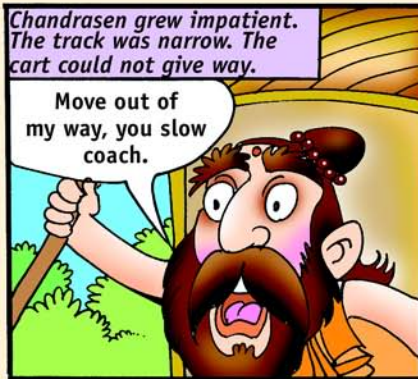


A bullock cart was ambling in front of his carriage.



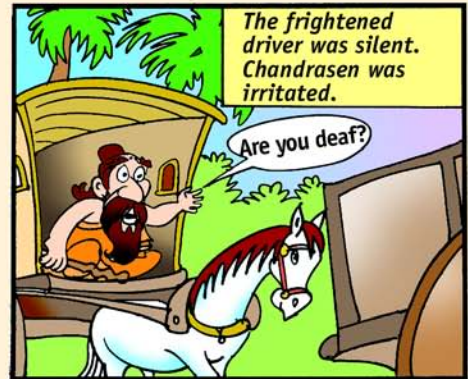
Chandrasen grew impatient. The track was narrow. The cart could not give way.

Move out of my way, you slow coach.



The frightened driver was silent. Chandrasen was irritated.

Are you deaf?

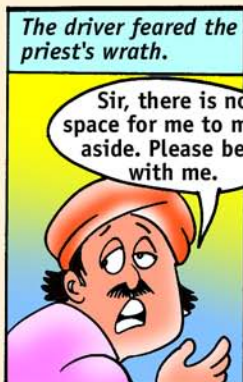


You have offended the king's most favoured man!



The driver feared the priest's wrath.

Sir, there is no space for me to move aside. Please bear with me.

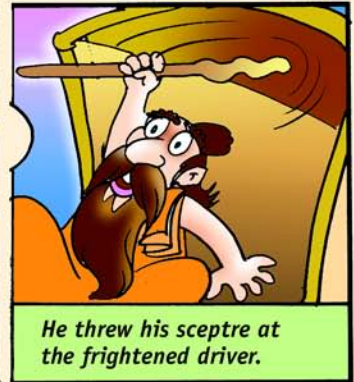


The priest was not ready to forgive him.

How dare you speak against me?



He threw his sceptre at the frightened driver.



But he had very poor aim. The sceptre hit the yoke of the carriage...



...and rebounded.

You'll pay for this!



JT-28/1, 2001





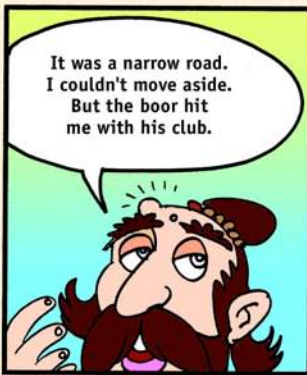
Chandrasen lamented loudly as he entered the king's court.

O king! Is might always right? Is there no justice in your land?



He twisted the story to suit himself.

I was driving my carriage to come here this morning. A bullock cart was behind me. The driver ordered me to give way.



It was a narrow road. I couldn't move aside. But the boor hit me with his club.

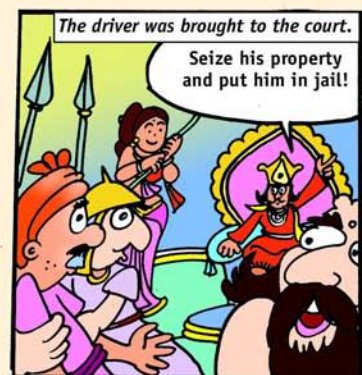


Look at the bump on my head. It hurts. OUCH!



The king was angry that his priest had been insulted.

Arrest the driver and bring him here!



The driver was brought to the court.

Seize his property and put him in jail!



O king! Please hear me. I'm not guilty.



Chandrasen hurriedly interjected.

You scoundrel, how dare you lie to the king. Come on, confess!



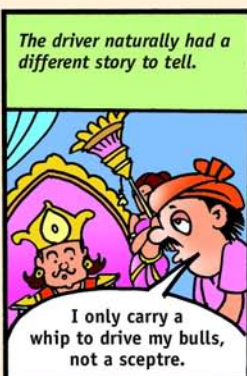
A wise minister, who knew Chandrasen's nature, interrupted.

Your majesty! It is only fair that you hear the driver before passing judgement.



The king heeded his minister's words.

Go on. Tell me the truth.



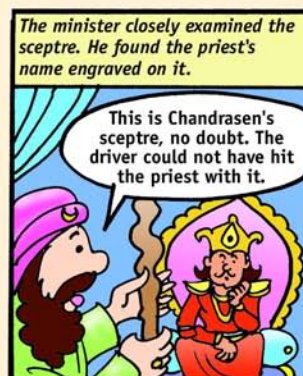
The driver naturally had a different story to tell.

I only carry a whip to drive my bulls, not a sceptre.



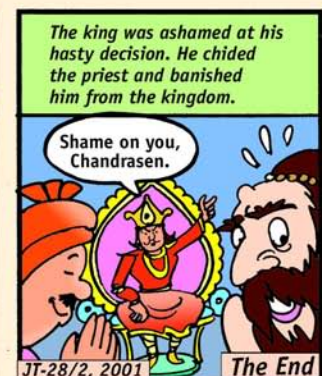
The minister ordered the soldiers to search the cart and the carriage.

We found a whip in the cart and this sceptre in the carriage.



The minister closely examined the sceptre. He found the priest's name engraved on it.

This is Chandrasen's sceptre, no doubt. The driver could not have hit the priest with it.



The king was ashamed at his hasty decision. He chided the priest and banished him from the kingdom.

Shame on you, Chandrasen.

JT-28/2, 2001

The End





Dear Eco-friends,

I'm sure you have seen pictures of the earth taken from great heights. Our planet appears like a beautiful greenish-blue ball. This is because of the natural gifts of water and greenery.

Today, however, a lot of the natural greenery is being depleted. A percentage of this is due to the ever-growing human need, while a lot of it is due to man's greed. The plants by themselves are helpless. So, we need to help them survive, because their survival ensures ecological balance, a cleaner atmosphere and an era of abundance. Let's take a vow to protect and preserve our silent friends.

Love

KOPRA KUTTY

Vasudha

## Green is the colour of hope

Trees are like people. They come in many different shapes and sizes. Like people, each tree has a distinct personality. We value trees because these silent givers contribute greatly to enriching our lives (by keeping the environment pollution free, and causing rainfall), protecting our home (by preventing soil erosion and natural calamities), providing us with a majority of the things we use in our daily lives (like food, medicines and clothes) and maintaining ecological balance by supporting wild life.

With the rapid increase in human population, there is an ever-increasing need for land. Coupled with this is the greed of individuals, which has led to rapid afforestation. If this continues, it will have a very serious impact on the environment. There have already been instances of acid rain, advancing of deserts, and recurring floods. So, it is in the interests of building a sound future for ourselves that we start taking care of plants and trees.



### What you can do to make the world greener

Make it your business to look after and protect the trees in your locality.

Whenever there is a need to cut down a tree, make sure another one is planted in its place.

Use paper made of recycled material.

Do not buy stuff that is made from illegal timber.





# Make your own plant food



Since plants are living things, they need food and water in order to grow well and remain healthy. That is why we need to manure the plants from time to time.

One very simple way of making your own manure or plant food is by composting. This is a very dark rich soil which is loaded with nutrients. The good thing about composting is that it helps you use up the otherwise useless kitchen waste.

Compost is made of a combination of green and brown materials. The green materials produce nitrogen while the brown materials provide carbon. It is important to remember that you should not use meat, oil, fat, weeds, and diseased leaves for making compost.

## Good green things:

Fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shell, coffee grounds, tea leaves, grass and plants.

## Good brown things:

Dry leaves, wood, bark chips, shredded old newspaper, sawdust.

## What you need-

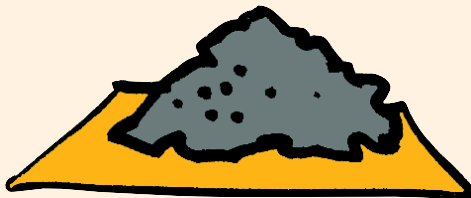
A plastic waste paper bin that can be covered; equal amounts of green and brown material; wire mesh; and some water.

## What you should do-

Place the wire mesh at the bottom of the basket, leaving at least 1 inch space between the mesh and the bottom of the basket.

Now put alternate layers of green and brown material till you reach the top. Now sprinkle a little water on the mound. Not too much. Just enough to moisten the contents.

Now cover the basket and leave it in a warm corner. Every fifteen days use a stick to turn the contents around.



Soon you will see that you have a rich dark soil in the place of individual compost ingredients.

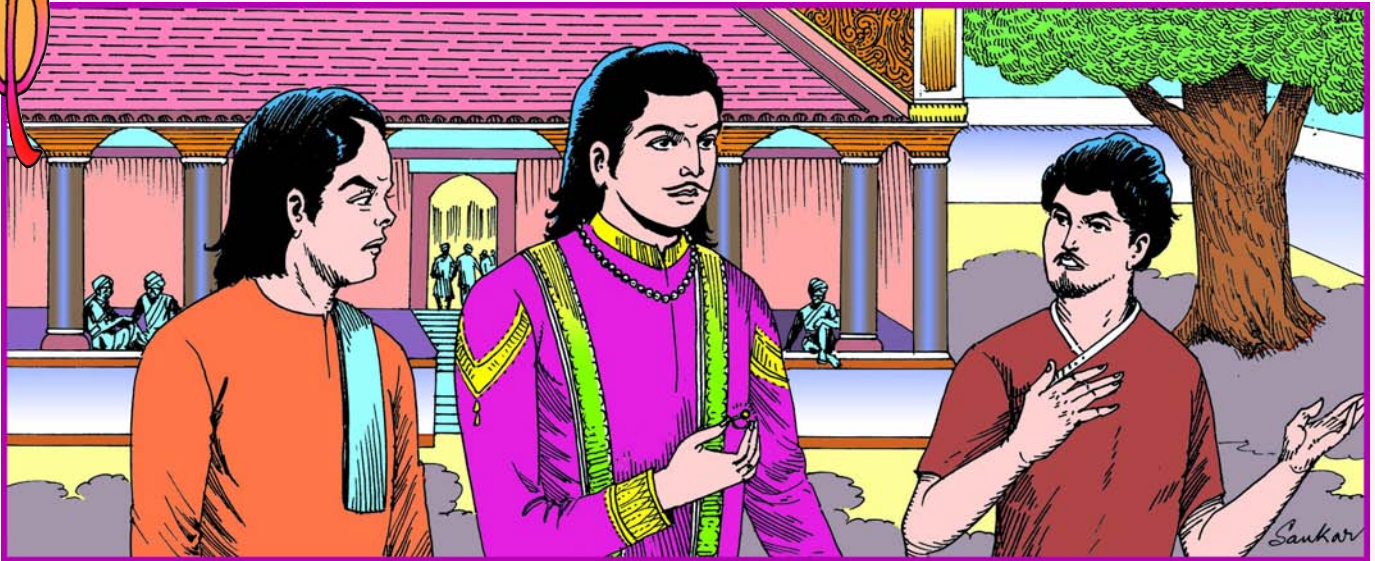
Use a handful of this at regular intervals to keep your plants strong and healthy.



**"He who plants a tree plants a hope"**

**- Lucy Larcom**

# The Third Boon



**T**he two young friends were chit-chatting at the roadside inn when a stranger approached them. “Would you like to buy this diamond ring?” asked them.

Of the two friends Vipul was wealthy whereas Chandrakant was a poor teacher. There was no question of the latter desiring to buy the ring. But Vipul, who knew how to distinguish false or inferior diamond from genuine precious stones, found the ring to be truly valuable. What is more, the ring did not seem to have been used by anyone.

“Where did you find the property?” asked Vipul.

“That is the last thing I shall reveal. If you do not buy it, I will go over to the town and sell it to a jeweller. It is because I need money urgently that I offer this to you,” said the stranger.

Vipul promised to buy the ring, but asked the stranger to accompany him to his house, as he was not expected to carry cash with him all the time. The stranger happily followed Vipul and his friend Chandrakant. Vipul became very friendly with the stranger and on reaching home, paid him the value of the ring. But he would not let the fellow depart immediately. “It is already evening. You should not walk the streets with so much money on you at night,” he argued. Chandrakant also supported his friend’s suggestion. The stranger agreed to pass the night as Vipul’s guest.

After Chandrakant had left, Vipul entertained his guest to a sumptuous dinner and made him drink mugfuls of wine. The stranger became very loose in his talks. He became so much pleased with his host that he revealed to the latter the source of the ring. In the forest not far from the town lived a Tantrik. He had the uncanny power to grant a man any wish, after a Yajna he performed once every month, at the middle of the *Amavasya* or the moonless night.

The stranger had managed to please him. The Tantrik gave him a pinch of ash from the Yajna chanting a hymn and asked him to wish any three boons within three blinks. The fellow could not think of anything except a diamond ring immediately. The moment it materialised, he fumbled and the time passed. Later he regretted that he had not asked for a kingdom.

In the morning the stranger had forgotten all about his conversation with his host. He left happily after his breakfast.

Vipul called his friend Chandrakant whom he trusted very much. Indeed, Chandrakant was not only honest, but truthful and wise. Vipul had decided to enter the forest in search of the Tantrik.

But he was afraid of doing so all alone. At the same time he did not wish anybody else to know about his



mission. He requested Chandrakant to give him company in his adventure.

Chandrakant was not enthusiastic about it at all. He advised his friend to refrain from his proposed mission. "Providence has given you enough. Why should you desire more? What is truly desirable is for inner peace, the joy of living honestly and truthfully."

"How do you conclude that there can be no other boon to ask from a Tantrik than money?" argued Vipul.

"Look here, my friend, there are only two right ways of getting anything. Either you work for it or something comes to you in a natural way. Your receiving anything from the Tantrik does not come under these categories. Whatever you get hold of in an unnatural way may have consequences that you will later regret," said Chandrakant.

But his advice did not produce the desired effect on Vipul who was determined to meet the Tantrik. Chandrakant accompanied him partly out of sympathy for the friend and partly out of a fear that the latter might do something wrong.

The moonless night was approaching when the two friends entered the forest. It was not difficult for them to locate the Tantrik's hut.

To their pleasant surprise, the Tantrik was quite courteous towards them and, under the impression that they had lost their way in the forest, offered them food. "You can pass the night in this hut of mine. I will now sit for a Yajna and leave the forest for good once the rite is over," the Tantrik informed them.

"But, Sir, why should you leave the forest for good?" asked Vipul.

"That's none of your business, my son. But there is no harm in informing you that I used to perform a Yajna here every *Amavasya* night in order to achieve something. That mission will be over once my Yajna is over tonight," explained the Tantrik.

"Is it not true that if you give a pinch of ash to somebody and he asks for any three boons while holding the ash, his wishes would be granted?" asked Vipul.

The Tantrik looked annoyed at the question. "Who told you? Probably that naïve fellow who obtained a diamond ring, even though I had forbidden him to utter a

word about it to anybody. Well, I did that out of my kindness for him," said the Tantrik.

"Why don't you become kind towards me? Kindly allow me to benefit by the sacred ash, once for all," said Vipul. The Tantrik laughed. "My boy, you cannot command kindness out of me. Either one feels kind or one does not. I have no reason to be kind towards you," answered the Tantrik.

But granting me that favour is not going to cost you anything! Why should you grudge it?" demanded Vipul.

"It may cost you terribly! I warn you, do not disturb my plan of the Yajna," said the Tantrik.

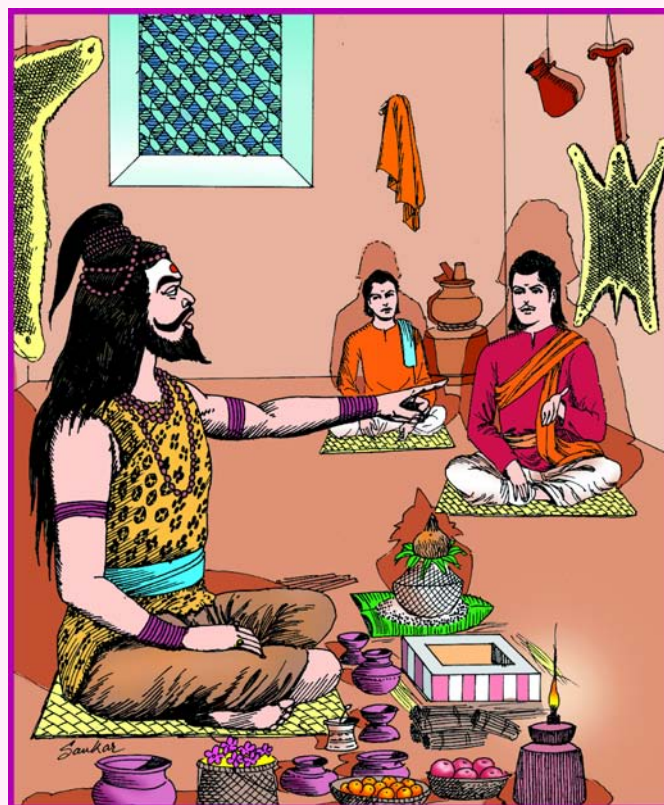
"But, unless you let me have my desires granted, I will not allow you to proceed with your rite. I will keep on disturbing the arrangements and the night will pass," Vipul threatened the Tantrik.

"Indeed!" muttered the Tantrik, gravely.

Chandrakant was feeling extremely awkward. "Vipul, for Heaven's sake, do not annoy the Tantrik. It may be bad for you," he warned his friend.

"Don't you interfere. Step aside. I'm not going to let this golden opportunity pass," rebuffed Vipul.

Chandrakant retreated a few steps and stood under





the hut, unable to decide what he should do. He could see the Tantrik lighting a fire and chanting some hymns while Vipul stood nearby. After sometime the Tantrik picked up a pinch of ash and put it on Vipul's palms. Though Chandrakant could not hear what boons Vipul had asked for, in the flicker of the flames he could see a sneer on the Tantrik's face.

"I've let you have your wish, because I could not have denied it to you or bluffed you because I've to be truthful tonight for the sake of my own mission. Now, get lost and leave me in peace," said the Tantrik.

Vipul bowed to him in a formal way and came dancing to his friend. Both of them walked back home.

When it was morning and they stood on the village square after a bath in the river, so many villagers had gathered there for a small local festivity. Looking at them, Vipul told his friend contemptuously, "All these fellows

would become my subjects, for I am going to be the monarch!"

"Is that the boon you obtained?" queried Chandrakant.

"That's one of the boons."

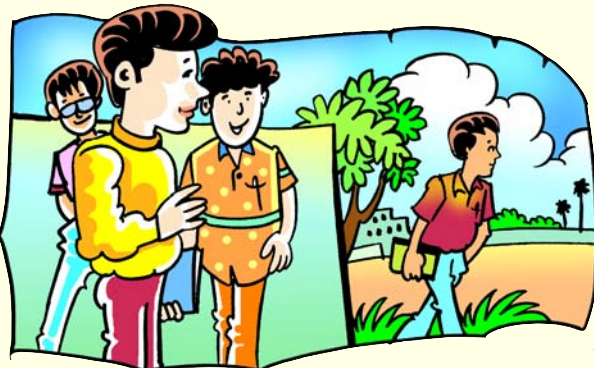
"What are the other boons?"

"Well, that I should never suffer from any disease and I should never grow old."

"But why didn't you ask for a long life?"

"How foolish of you! I should not grow old means I should ever remain young!"

Suddenly Vipul's face became pale. He clutched at his chest and collapsed. "What a fool I was!" he muttered while Chandrakant and others sat around him, feeling anxious. "It never occurred to me that the boon I wished could mean that I will not live to grow old! What a blunder I made!" He groaned and breathed his last.



## Cross-eyed genius

Karthik was returning from the college canteen with a group of friends. He noticed a cross-eyed student emerging from one of the gates.

"Who is that young fellow?" queried Karthik.

"I know his father well," answered one in the group.

"That young man is Rajesh, son of my neighbour, Gopal.

Why do you ask?" "I predict that he will be a genius,"

asserted Karthik, "and I would like to employ him some day to keep my accounts."

"What had impressed you so much about the boy?" "With those cross eyes," explained Karthik, "he would be able to read both pages of a book at the same time!"



## KALEIDOSCOPE

### A CLEVER ESCAPE



One evening I was playing cricket with my brother in the cricket ground near our house. As it was getting dark, we began packing our things to go home. Just then a car stopped and an uncle got clown and asked us the way to a certain street. I gave him the direction. My brother, who is always fascinated by cars, was very keenly looking at the Alto. That uncle told us that he would drop us at our house on the way. We got into the back seat and he began driving. We saw him go in the wrong direction and both of us together shouted, "Uncle, you're going in the wrong direction!" He immediately showed us a knife and asked us to keep quiet. The shutters of the car were then rolled up and he played the stereo aloud, so that no one hear our shouts. Both of us were very scared.

later the car had to wait for the signal. It was a 2 minute signal. Another side and we saw our neighbour Uncle Guru sitting inside. It was his car. I and signalled to him. We slowly slipped out of the Alto and got into Uncle

Uncle. He informed the police over his mobile. The kidnapper was caught at the next signal.

Our grandfather was very happy over our courage and gave a pen to me and a watch to my brother.

*Sandhya B. (10), Bangalore*

### MAHESH'S ACT

"BEEP! BEEP!" went Mahesh's alarm. Today was the big day. Tod family. "Hurrah!" cried Mahesh. He quickly brushed his teeth and we dressed, he packed his swimming trunks, goggles, towel, etc. "Mahest ready!" shouted his mother. Within a second he rushed downstairs and I for the dining table. He gobbled his breakfast so fast that even his mott not eat a spoonful.

HONK! HONK! "It's the car!" cried Mahesh. When everyone got ins the car started moving. When they were travelling, they came across so poor people. 'Wonder how they live!' wondered Mahesh. When th reached Essel World, they paid for the tickets. Mahesh was good c every event. In the bowling alley he was a knockout. But the real fur was when he got a prize of Rs 500! While returning home, he saw those poor people again. Suddenly, he asked the driver to stop. He got down and took out the prize money and divided it among them. He felt that it was better to give than to receive. He felt very happy after distributing the money to those poor people.



*G. Arun Gopal (7), Navi Mumbai*



## MONEY

We can buy books with money  
But can you buy Education?  
We can buy medicines with money  
But can you buy Health?  
We can buy a watch with money  
But can you buy Time?  
We can get "things of comfort"  
Can they give us "Peace"?  
Can we buy respect and talent  
Can we control death by this?  
So money is something but not everything!

*G.T. Kumar (12), Jaggayyapet*

## EXAMS

Even if exams are a fright  
Don't sit up and study all night.  
Just make your daily schedule tight.  
With your brains don't fight.  
Study with all your might.  
Then exams will become terribly light.

*Sharanya Sukumar (9), Mumbai*



## FUNNY GEESE

There were some geese  
That lived on trees  
Along with some fleas and bees.  
If you said "please"  
They'd give you some cheese,  
But if you seized the geese  
They wouldn't let you live in peace!

*- Archit Verma (9), New York*







**Mother :** Ramu, time is precious. It keeps ticking away, so don't waste it.

**Ramu:** Don't worry, Mom, I've already removed the battery from the clock.

**M. Shruthi (9), Mysore**



**Neighbour :** Ramu, what're you doing up there?

**Ramu :** I'm eating guavas, they're very sweet, Uncle.

**Neighbour :** Come down this moment! Your father will be

angry.

**Ramu :** No, he won't.

**Neighbour :** Why?

**Ramu :** He's up there on another branch! He, too, is enjoying the guavas!



**A. Nayanakumari (14), Kadapa**

**Teacher :**  
How long did  
Emperor  
Akbar  
rule?  
**Raju :**  
From  
page 14  
to 25, Sir.



**S.R. Vinodkumar (14), Bangalore**

**Judge :**  
Do you  
know  
what  
happens  
when you  
utter a  
lie?

**Convict :**  
Yes, I'll go  
to hell.

**Judge :** And when you tell the truth?

**Convict :** I'll go to jail.



**Sunita Pal (13), Nayagarh**

**Principal :** Why are the  
students shouting?

**Teacher :** They are not  
shouting, Sir. They are  
only discussing the  
benefits of silence.



**Son :** Father, would you  
call a father more  
intelligent than his son?

**Father :** Of course!

**Son :** Then, why is it that  
Christopher Columbus  
discovered America, and  
not his father?

**Arvind Kumar Pandey (13) , Gorakhpur**

**Anand :** How can  
you eat an egg  
without breaking  
the shell?

**Mohan :** Ask  
someone else to  
break it for you.



**G.T. Kumar (12), Jaggayyapet**



## MATHS PUZZLE

P	F	T	L	V	Y	F	G	D	G	V	J
E	F	A	D	D	B	R	D	G	E	M	U
R	G	L	I	I	I	A	Z	N	O	X	M
C	J	G	F	V	C	C	C	R	M	M	U
E	V	E	H	I	F	T	E	S	E	X	L
N	H	B	A	D	T	I	X	R	T	W	T
T	C	R	D	E	G	O	V	K	R	E	I
A	G	A	N	X	C	N	G	L	Y	B	P
G	E	U	S	U	B	T	R	A	C	T	L
E	X	S	C	X	V	P	A	T	E	P	Y
Z	C	Z	N	E	Y	S	P	G	Y	O	N
D	E	C	I	M	A	L	H	I	R	X	E

The following terms in mathematics are in the grid. Can you find them?

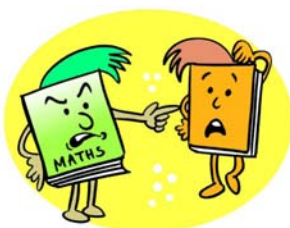
- **Nithya Ramachandran (13), Chennai**

## QUIZ

1. How can you get a total of 1000 by using sixteen 4's?

2.  $6 = 1 \times 6$   
 $6 = 2 \times 6$   
 $6 = 3 \times 6$   
 $6 = 4 \times 6$   
 $6 = 5 \times 6$   
 $6 = 6 \times 6$   
 $6 = 7 \times 6$   
 $6 = 8 \times 6$   
 $6 = 9 \times 6$   
 How is this possible?

- **G. Pradyumna (13), Chennai**



- **Vinod Kumar (14), Bangalore**

3. What did one maths book say to the other?



- **T. Akshhaya (13), Chennai**

4. Where do you take a sick horse?

1. The letter 'M'  
 2. By jumping off the first step.  
 3. You're full of problems!  
 4. Horspital

2.  $9 \times 1 = 9$   
 $9 \times 2 = 18 (1+8=9)$   
 $9 \times 3 = 27 (2+7=9)$   
 $9 \times 4 = 36 (3+6=9)$   
 $9 \times 5 = 45 (4+5=9)$   
 $9 \times 6 = 54 (5+4=9)$   
 $9 \times 7 = 63 (6+3=9)$   
 $9 \times 8 = 72 (7+2=9)$   
 $9 \times 9 = 81 (8+1=9)$

## RIDDLES



1. What comes once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years?

- **Abishek Shetty (12), Mumbai**

2. How can you jump off a 50ft ladder and yet not get hurt?



- **Vinod Kumar (14), Bangalore**

Quiz :  
 $1. 444+444+44+44+4+4+4+4=1000$

P	F	T	L	V	Y	F	G	D	G	V	J
E	F	A	D	D	B	R	D	G	E	M	U
R	G	L	I	I	I	A	Z	N	O	X	M
C	J	G	F	V	C	C	C	R	M	M	U
E	V	E	H	I	F	T	E	S	E	X	L
N	H	B	A	D	T	I	X	R	T	W	T
T	C	R	D	E	G	O	V	K	R	E	I
A	G	A	N	X	C	N	G	L	Y	B	P
G	E	U	S	U	B	T	R	A	C	T	L
E	X	S	C	X	V	P	A	T	E	P	Y
Z	C	Z	N	E	Y	S	P	G	Y	O	N
D	E	C	I	M	A	L	H	I	R	X	E

MATHS PUZZLE :

Answers :

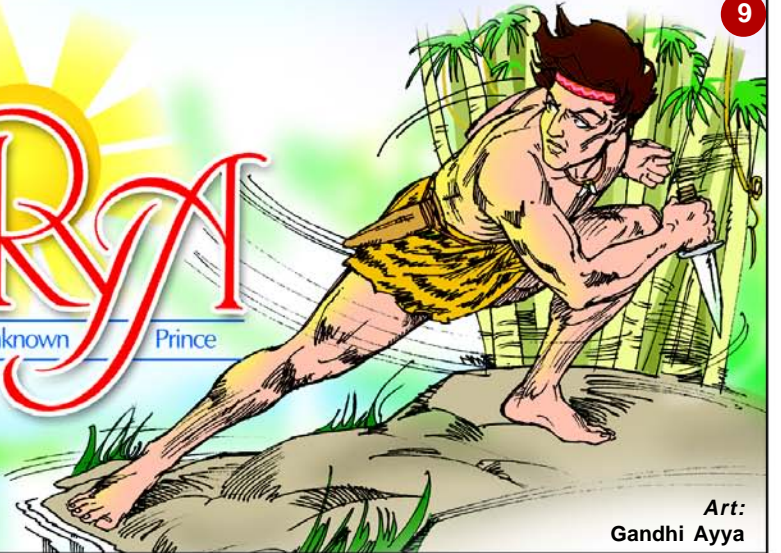


Shantipur is in turmoil following King Shantidev's disappearance. The queen is no more; the infant prince is safe with hermit Jayananda. He meets the chieftain of Jainagar and hands over the prince's chain and locket with the royal insignia for safe custody.

# ARYA

The Mystery of the Unknown Prince

9



Art:  
Gandhi Ayya

Jayananda gets up to leave.

I shall keep the chain safe, Baba.

Whoever is responsible for the present situation will face the hardest test in their life.

Babu, I've a feeling the king has saved his life.

I hope he reappears soon, and restores peace in the kingdom, Baba.

Meanwhile, is there anything more that I can do?

We've to wait and watch the situation. Let me go now. Bagha will be waiting for me at the temple.



In Shantipur, Vir Singh assumes the role of king without waiting for a coronation.

Amar Singh, we must divert the people's attention. Let's attack our neighbours. What do you say?

Why not Amritpur? King Premnath has fallen ill ever since his daughter and infant son disappeared.

General Amar Singh holds a secret meeting with his captains.

In a tavern the next day-

When do we start for Amritpur?

My sword is thirsting for blood!

Amritpur? Attack!

The captains do not recognise Vasant who is in disguise. He listens to their conversation.

I must rush back to Amritpur. Ah! A blessing in disguise!

He unties one of the captains' horse tethered outside and rides away.



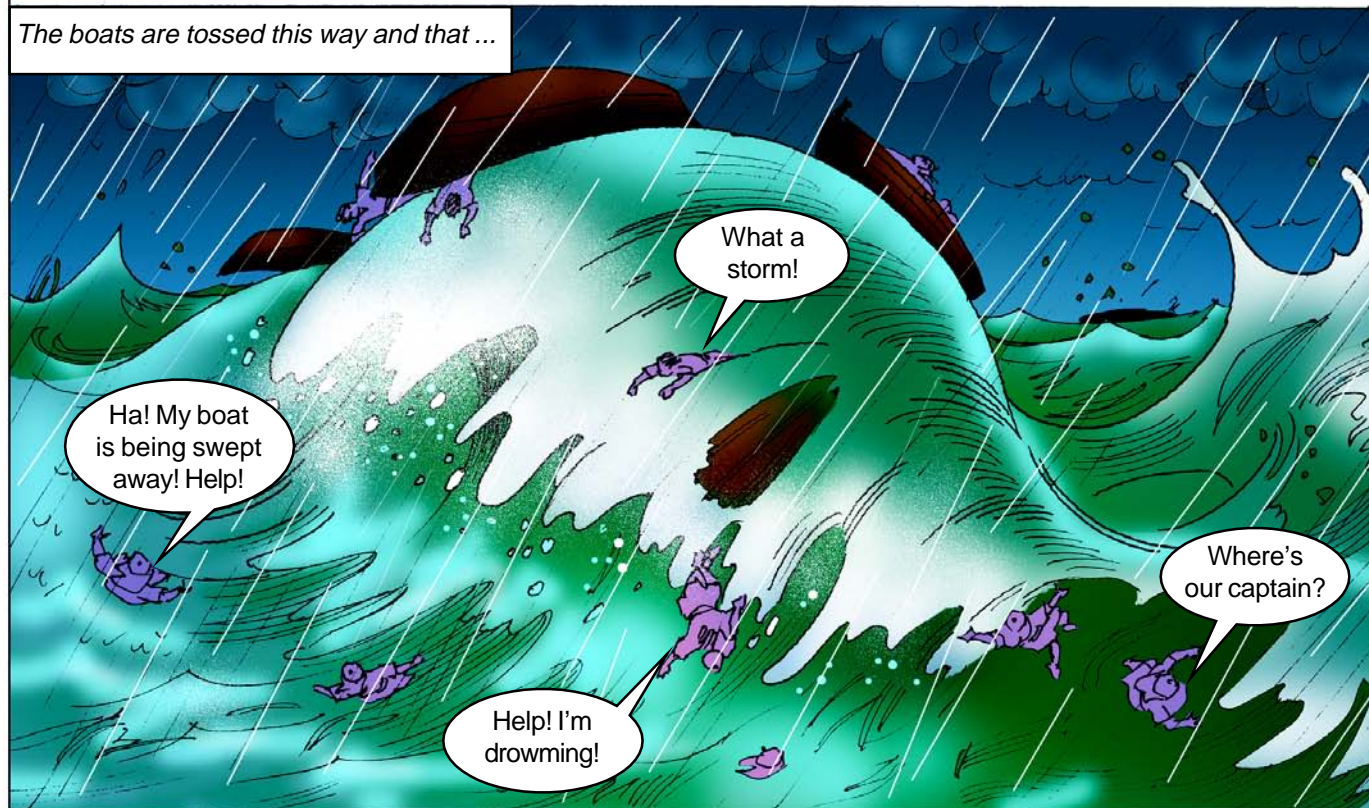




Suddenly a storm breaks out ...

...and the river is in spate.

The boats are tossed this way and that ...



...and the soldiers are swept away. Many of them drown. King Premnath's premonition seems to have come true.

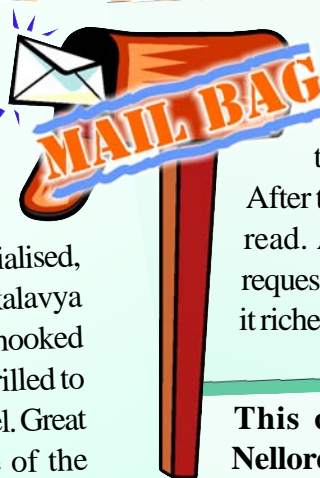


Contd.



**This came by e-mail from Babu Roy:**

I think the first copy of *Chandamama* was brought to me sometime in the late 60s or early 70s. It has since then remained an integral part of my life. At that time, the *Mahabharata* was being serialised, and as a child of 5, the cover picture of Ekalavya cutting his thumb had attracted me. I got hooked to the magazine instantly. Later, I was thrilled to see the magazine in a different look and feel. Great to have it. I still await the next issue of the magazine with the same anticipation that I used to have 20/30 years ago.



**Reader K.S. Krishna of Mangalore writes:**

*Chandamama* was really nice and good to read when it was in the small format. After the change in size, it is long and tedious to read. As a reader for the last two decades, I request you to revert to the smaller size and make it richer in stories from mythology and history.

**Reader S. Basheer Ahmed of Mayanur** says he reads *Chandamama* in his school library and likes the magazine very much.

**This came from K. Ananth Rupesh, Nellore:**

*Chandamama* gives fascinating reading material month after month. Ruskin Bond's stories really move my heart. Prof. Manoj Das's answers to the questions are easy to understand and apt. The magazine gives a very good description of India's culture and heritage. The usefulness of *Chandamama* cannot be expressed in words.

## Facts, not the fiction!

**What is the origin of the words "brass tacks"? asks Amitabh Goel of Navrangpur.**

In England, certain expressions are called Cockney—a kind of dialect commonly in use in the eastern districts of London. It is said taxi-drivers in those areas speak Cockney. "Tacks" rhymes with facts, and so when people say "Let's come down to brass tacks", they mean "Let's discuss the facts."

There is yet another explanation. In shops selling textile goods, the salesmen nail brass tacks on the table between a length of, let us say, a yard or a metre, at the edge of the table. Instead of using a long rule, they can easily measure the length by holding the cloth between the two tacks. One may come across

T  
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BETTER  
ENGLISH

the expression among these salesmen "get down to brass tacks".

When children, while playing, break windowpanes, the parents often say: "Let's get down to brass stacks; who's going to pay for the broken window?" Got it?

**K.Mohanachandran of Kanhirapally, Kerala, wants to know the meaning of the expression "missing the woods for the trees".**

When one focuses on the unimportant details rather than the important ones, it tantamounts to one noticing only the trees and failing to appreciate the overall picture of the woods.

Imagine you are required to make a presentation of a project, and you begin concentrating on the minute details and forget the more important aspects of the project.



## Shrew



The shrew is the smallest mammal in the world. The family is distributed throughout the world except Australia. Shrews range in size from 74 to 158 mm (3 to 6.5 inches). Their tails are typically from one-quarter to one-half of their length. They

weigh from 1.5 to 20 grams. Most are brown or grey in colour. Shrews are short-legged and have long pointed noses with long whiskers. They have sharp teeth for attacking and eating prey. Shrews have musk glands that give off a strong odour, which helps protect them from carnivores (except owls). Their vision is poor, but they have acute senses of smell and hearing. Their diet consists of insects, earthworms, grubs, and other invertebrates, as well as berries and soft vegetation. Many shrews will eat the equivalent of their own body weight every 24 hours. Most shrews live in moist habitats.

## Seismograph

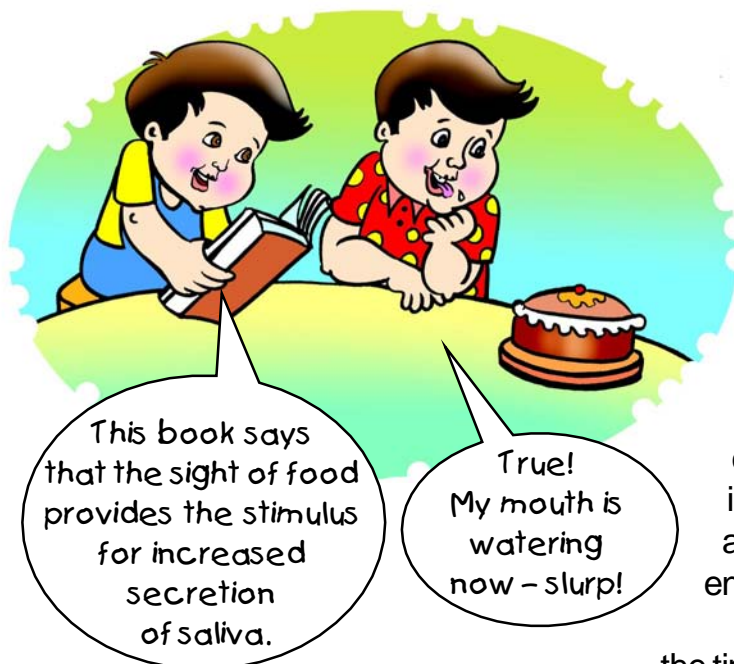
A seismograph is an instrument used to detect and record movements within the earth, which are known as seismic waves. Since the seismograph is a highly sensitive instrument, it can pick up vibrations which cannot be sensed by man. It records a zigzag trace that shows the varying amplitude of ground oscillations beneath the instrument. The vibrations are traced on a record called a *seismogram*. The seismograph can detect strong earthquakes from sources anywhere in the world. The time, location, and magnitude of an earthquake can be determined from the data recorded by seismograph stations. Advances in seismograph technology have increased our understanding of both earthquakes and the earth itself. Apart from its use in detecting earthquakes, the seismograph is also used in measuring the depth of icecaps in the Polar regions, in prospecting for metals, and in exploring for oil. It was John Milne, an English seismologist and geologist who invented the modern seismograph and promoted the building of seismological stations.



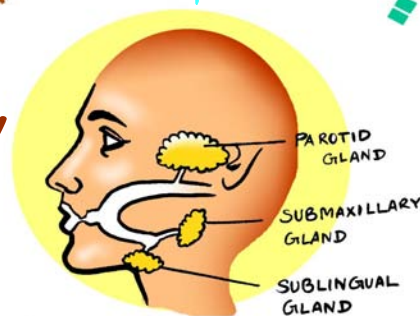
I can sense some rumblings in my tummy. Do you think I need a seismograph to find the intensity?

No, silly, what you need is lunch! Come on!





## Salivary glands



Salivary glands –They are the glands found in and around one's mouth and throat, which secrete a liquid called *saliva*.

The salivary glands fall into three categories. The *parotid glands* are located in the tissue below and in front of the ear, and their secretion is watery and contains enzymes.

The *submaxillary glands*, which open under the tip of the tongue, produce watery and mucous secretions. The *sublingual glands*, lying under the mucous membrane over the floor of the mouth, secrete mucous. There are also many tiny glands called minor salivary glands located in your lips, inner cheek area (buccal mucosa), and extensively in other linings of the mouth and throat.

Salivary glands produce the saliva used to moisten the mouth, initiate digestion, and protect your teeth from decay.

## Activity

**Using the clues given below, see if you can identify the famous scientists mentioned here.**

1. This chemical process used in the manufacture of sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate (washing soda and baking soda), is named after its inventors, Ernest and Alfred \_\_\_\_\_
2. The scientist who, along with Edwin M. McMillan, shared the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1951 for discovering the element plutonium.
3. The process in which a metal with a low melting point is used to join two other metals is known as \_\_\_\_\_
4. A small bird of prey that impales its prey on thorny branches or spikes.
5. The two times of the year when the sun appears highest and lowest in the sky, also resulting in the longest and shortest days, are called \_\_\_\_\_

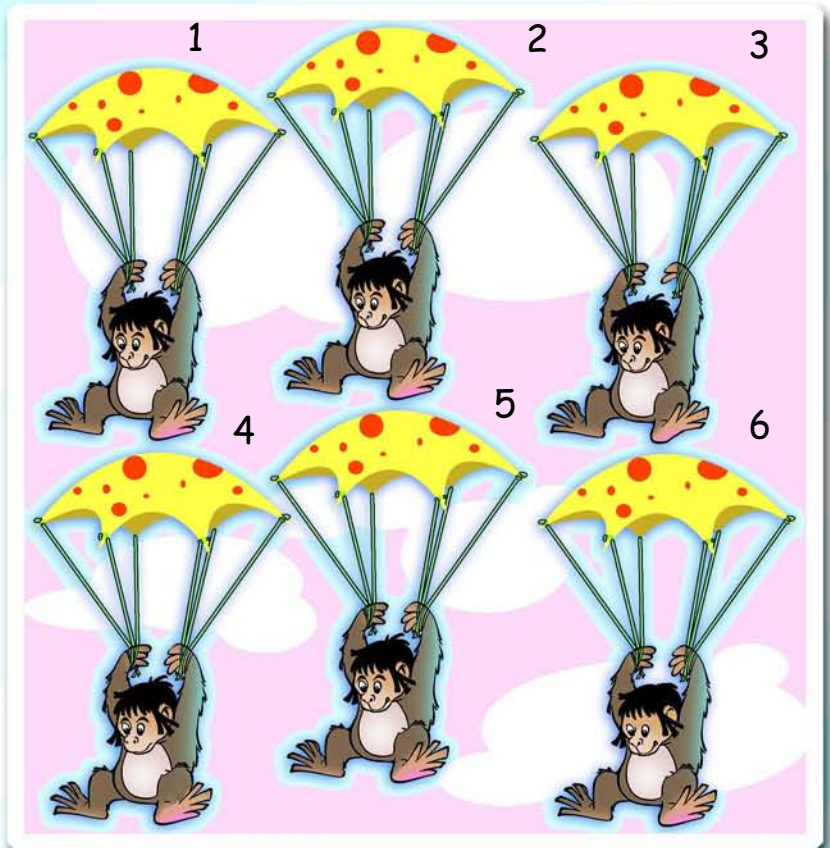


- Answers
1. Solvay
  2. Seaborg, Dr. Glenn Theodore
  3. Soldering
  4. Shrike
  5. Solstices



## Spot them out

Two of the flying monkeys are similar. Can you spot them?



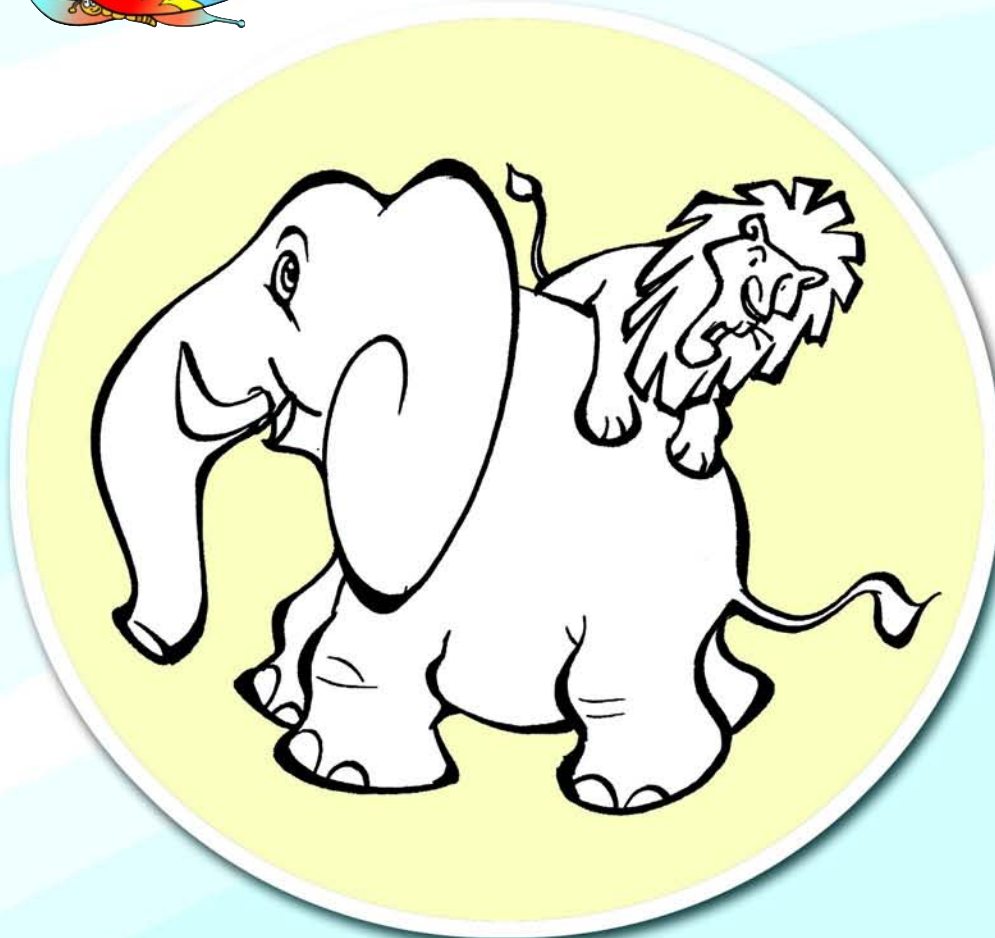
## What's the difference?

Except one, all the three has unusual organs with them. Look carefully and identify the difference.



## Find the hidden fishes

Bhalu is going for fishing but all the fishes are hidden here. Can you try to find them?



## Colouring fun

These unusual friends are having a great time. You can also join them by colouring with many colours.

*(Answers on page 64)*





# Laugh till you drop!



"Isn't the principal a dummy!" said a boy to a girl.

"Say, do you know who I am?" asked the girl.

"No."

"I'm the principal's daughter."

"And do you know who I am?" asked the boy.

"No," she replied.

"Thank goodness!"



**Pupil (on phone) :** My son has a bad cold and won't be able to come to school today.

**School Secretary:** Who is speaking?

**Pupil:** This is my father speaking !

~~~~~

**Teacher :** Bunty, go to the map and find North America.

**Bunty :** Here it is!

**Teacher :** Correct. Now, class, who discovered America?

**Class:** Bunty!



~~~~~

**Mother lion :** Son, what are you doing?

**Baby lion :** I'm chasing a man round a tree.

**Mother lion :** How often must I tell you not to play with your food.

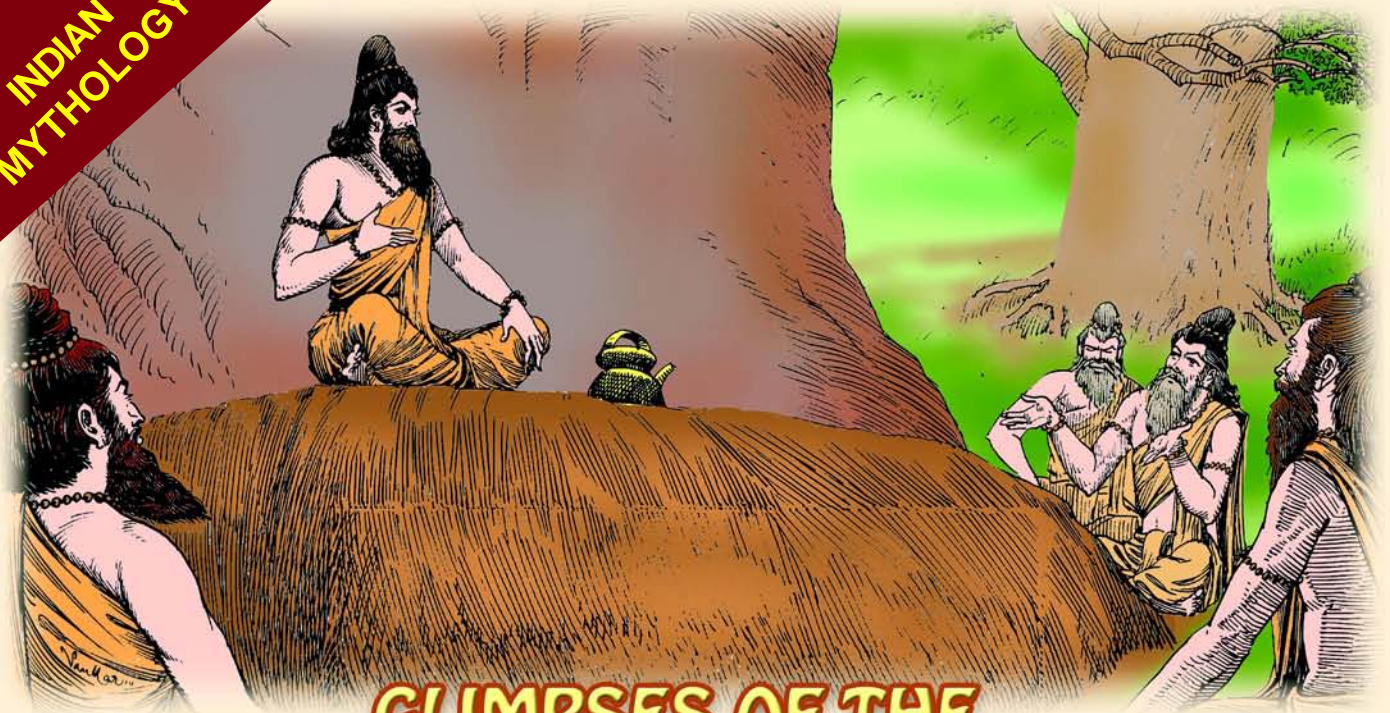


## Dushtu Dattu

Dattu's mother is just back from a shopping trip, when Dattu meets her at the door....







## GLIMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

**T**he sage Suta went on narrating the episodes of bygone times to the other sages. “The power of the Divine Mother is infinite. People worship many gods. But from where do the gods derive their strength? It is from the Divine Mother, the Supreme Shakti,” said Suta, and he went on to illustrate his point:

There was a time when even Vishnu, the great God who sustains the universe, was lying as an infant on a banyan leaf that floated in the Sea of Consciousness. In that condition he had no memory of his past, nor any knowledge of the future. He wondered and desired to know who he was. It was in her infinite compassion that the Divine Mother had manifested before him. At her sight, Knowledge flashed in the infant Vishnu’s mind. The Divine Mother is the repository of all knowledge, love and strength.

Once when every thing was water, two demons, Madhu and Kaitav, had a glimpse of the Divine Mother. Inspired by the vision, they spent a thousand years in prayer to invoke Her Grace. At last the Divine Mother

was pleased and appeared before them and offered them a boon.

“Grant that we would die only when we wish to die,” the demons begged of Her.

“Your wish is granted,” said the Divine Mother and disappeared.

The two demons grew so proud that they soon challenged Vishnu to a fight. When Madhu was tired, he took rest while Kaitav continued to fight. When Kaitav was tired, Madhu fought. But there was nobody to come to Vishnu’s help. Soon Vishnu was tired and proposed that they stopped fighting for a while.

The two demons agreed to the proposal. During the respite Vishnu concentrated on the mystery of the demons’ zeal. The knowledge then flashed in him how they had obtained a boon to die only when they wished.

Vishnu prayed to the Divine Mother to come to his rescue. The Mother was pleased. She withdrew that part of Her power which works as intelligence in all beings. As a result, the two demons began swelling with pride.

### 2. VISHNU OUTWITS TWO DEMONS



“I have fought many a demon, but never have I seen brave ones like you, Why don’t you ask me for a boon?” asked Vishnu.

The demons laughed. “Vishnu! You are the one who is about to be vanquished. How can we, the victors, pray for a boon from the vanquished? Better you ask for a boon from us! We shall grant it,” they promised.

“Very well. Grant that you will die in my hands!” said Vishnu.

The demons were outwitted. “Let it be so,” they said.

Vishnu now killed the demons. It was out of their fat or *Meda* that the earth was made. That is why the earth is called *Medini*.

The sages asked Suta, “You had a friend in Shuka, the son of Vyasa. When and how was he born?”

Suta narrated the story: Once Vyasa, while gazing at a flame, thought, ‘I wonder if there is a woman who is capable of giving birth to a son as pure as this flame!’

Just then a beautiful nymph called Ghritachi was passing by, followed by Madan, the god of Love. Vyasa was charmed by her, but he tried to take his attention away from her, lest the nymph one day deserted him, as Urvashi had deserted Pururavas.

“Will you please tell us what really happened to Urvashi and Pururavas?” the listeners asked Suta.

Long ago, there was a king named Pururavas. He had such powers that he could pay visits to the heavenly abode of gods. One day, he saw Urvashi, the celebrated nymph, in the court of Indra. The mortal king and the immortal nymph were attracted towards each other.

As she showed weakness for a human, she forfeited her right to dwell in heaven. She came down to earth and lived as Pururavas’s wife. The joy of the lovers could hardly be described! The couple lived happily.

However, Indra could not tolerate the absence of the celestial danseuse from his court. He asked his courtiers to do all that was necessary to make her return to heaven.

Meanwhile, Pururavas had to comply with some conditions so that Urvashi would stay with him. He was never to be seen clumsily dressed like other mortals. Urvashi would not stand such a sight.

Urvashi had two pet lambs. One rainy night the gods

came to steal them away. The lambs bleated in panic. Both Pururavas and Urvashi woke up. Pururavas jumped out of his bed in order to chase the thieves. He had no chance to wear his clothes properly. Just then there was a flash of lightning and Urvashi saw how clumsy Pururavas looked.

At once she had to return to heaven. The separation from Urvashi made Pururavas go almost mad. He roamed about here and there looking for her. One day, he caught a glimpse of her near a lake. His voice charged with emotion,



he said, “Come back to me, O Urvashi, for I cannot live without you. Haven’t I loved you more than my life? Haven’t I done everything possible to please you?”

“You have, O dear King. But such is the fate that an immortal cannot live with a mortal forever. That is why we are bound by certain conditions. O King, forget me, and give all your attention to the affairs of your kingdom,” said Urvashi and, with a sigh, she disappeared.

Although Vyasa remembered this incident, he could not check his love for Ghritachi. It was this nymph who gave birth to Shukadeva. *(To continue)*

# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## Amazing Stones

**Twelve gems are hidden in the grid below. To find them, look up, down, sideways, backward, and diagonally.**

**How many can you identify?**



E	T	T	E	N	R	A	G	T	X	Z	P
N	Z	U	L	O	D	E	L	S	Y	N	E
I	O	R	R	Q	A	G	K	B	V	S	R
R	Q	Q	A	A	M	I	U	S	Q	T	I
A	F	U	E	M	E	R	A	L	D	G	D
M	G	O	P	T	T	N	I	I	I	D	O
A	U	I	F	K	H	Q	K	L	A	F	T
U	S	S	G	N	Y	P	O	G	M	T	O
Q	A	E	J	S	S	L	A	P	O	U	P
A	M	T	U	D	T	T	S	T	N	J	A
S	A	P	P	H	I	R	E	N	D	H	Z
N	F	G	A	A	Q	S	V	W	Q	Y	T

### Clues:

1. I belong to Quartz group and I am the birthstone of Pisceans.
2. I am a pale blue watery colour stone and I belong to Beryl group.
3. I am the hardest rock and I can be cut by my own kind.
4. I belong to Beryl group but I am not Aquamarine. I am considerably softer than the diamond.
5. I am the birthstone of Aquarians and my colour vary from cinnamon-yellow through fiery-red to green.
6. I have three types—black, precious and fire and can be chipped or cracked and damaged by heat.
7. I am made by oysters.
8. I am the least known gemstone found in Australia, Myanmar and the Island of St. John in the Red Sea.
9. I am deep crimson in colour and I share my property with emerald.
10. I am not ruby but I belong to corundum group.
11. I am the birthstone of Sagittarians.
12. I have always been in Iran (Persia), but traditionally marketed in Turkey, hence the name.

*(Answer on page ...64)*

**- By R Vaasugi**



# How cats and mice became enemies

**L**ong, long ago, cats and mice were very good friends. Then how did they become enemies? It's a long story, indeed!

One day, a mouse wanted to go to a nearby village. But he was afraid to go alone. So he went to his friend, the cat, and said, "My friend, will you go with me to the village? I hear it's full of good things to eat. They have ponds full of delicious fish, too! You can catch any number of them."

The cat agreed. They packed some food for the journey and set out. They walked through the woods and soon reached a wide river. "I can't swim. How will I cross the river?" the cat asked.

"Don't worry, we'll make a boat," said the mouse.

"See that big pumpkin over there. We'll use it as a boat."

The mouse was pointing at a vegetable garden nearby. There was a huge pumpkin growing on one of the creepers there. Together they plucked the pumpkin and rolled it to the river bank. The mouse then sat down and began to gnaw at the pumpkin. He gnawed at it until it got the shape of a boat.

"Mouse, you are very clever!" said the cat, looking at the pumpkin-shaped boat with amazement. They then pushed the boat into the river, loaded it with food and began to row. They ate the food on the way. The

river was very wide, and it was a long and tiresome journey.

The cat soon fell asleep but the mouse could not sleep well as he was hungry again. So, he began gnawing at the boat since there was no food left.

The gnawing sound made by the mouse disturbed the cat and he woke up. "What was that?" he asked. "I don't know! I was sleeping," the mouse lied.

The cat closed his eyes and again fell asleep once more. The mouse began gnawing at the boat once again. Soon there was a hole in the boat and water began to flow in.

The cat woke up. "My God! The boat is sinking!" he said to himself.

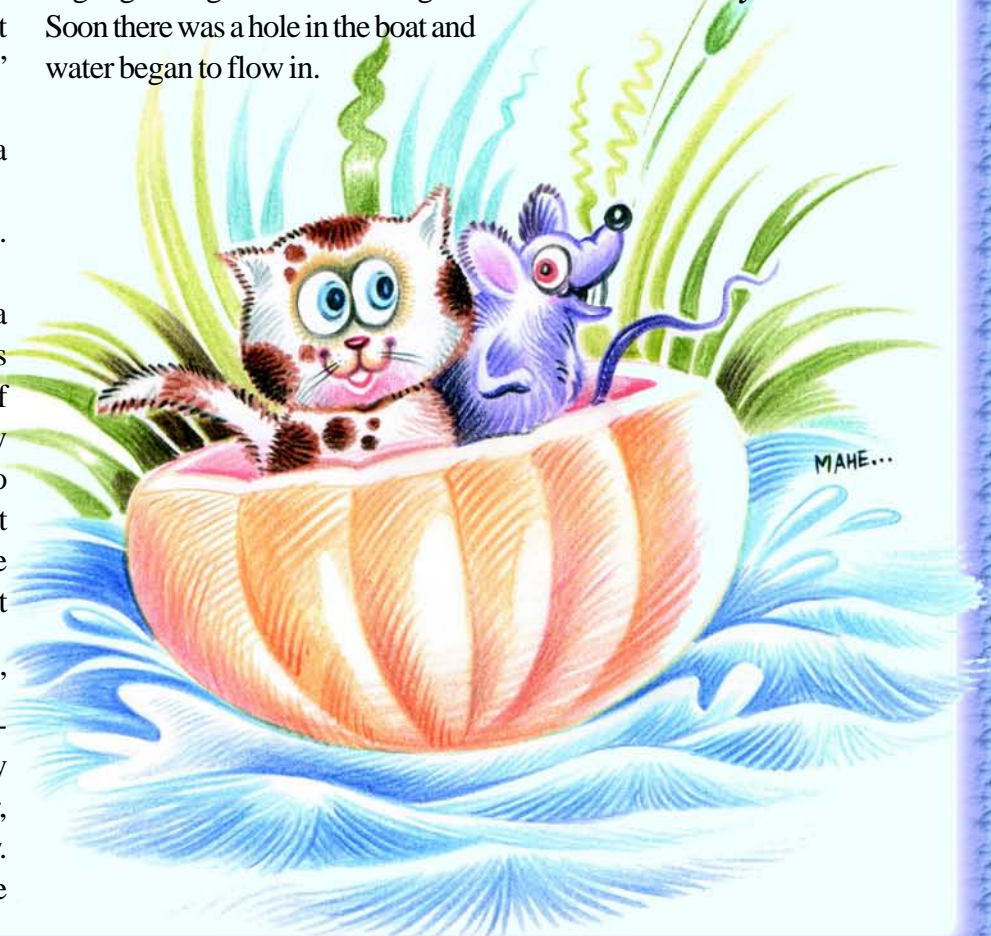
Luckily, the boat had reached the other side of the river and just as the two leapt onto the bank, it sank.

The cat was very angry. "You cheat! You were trying to kill me by sinking the boat. Wait till I catch you!" he shouted and sprang at the mouse.

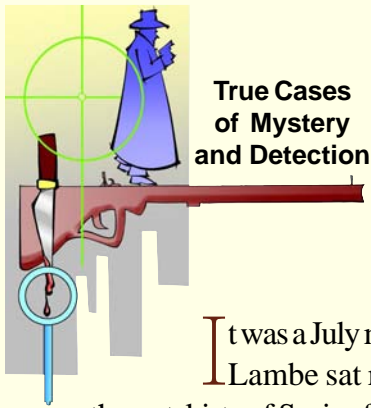
The mouse ran for his life, happy that the cat could not catch him.

Ever since that day, cats and mice have been bitter enemies.

*- Retold by Jubel D'Cruz*







# PARALLEL LIVES

It was a July morning in 1948. Young Alice Lambe sat reading a book in her home on the outskirts of Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A. All of a sudden she felt a tremendous jolt on the left side of her body. It seemed as though someone had gave her an invisible blow. So forceful was the impact that she was just tossed unto the floor from the chair while the book flew and landed in one corner of the room. Then a piercing and stabbing pain made her reel in agony. "Papa, something terrible has happened to Diane!" she just managed to mumble to her father and fainted.

Diane was none other than her identical twin. On that day she was in St. Louis, 110 km away. Around 4.35 in the afternoon, the train she was travelling on derailed and she was thrown off her seat. She landed with a big thud and swooned. On regaining her senses she found herself in a hospital with two fractured ribs on the left side. She had to take leave from work for the next three weeks.

Surprisingly, her twin sister Alice Lambe had to stay at home from work for three weeks, too. For, she also had broken two of her ribs on the left side of her body. In fact both the sisters had fractured the very same ribs! It is amazing how both of them met with an accident simultaneously at 4.35 p.m. Diane's train jumped off the rails and Alice was just thrown off her chair for no apparent reason. But how did Alice know that her twin sister was in danger from a distance of more than a

hundred kilometres? Do twins have an unseen link between themselves? If Alice sneezes five hundred miles away, will Diane too sneeze at that very moment? Who knows!

Nettie Porter and Nita Hust were twin sisters. It so happened that on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1975, Nettie met with a car accident in Roseville, California. At that very moment

Nita was working in a hospital about 650km away. But believe

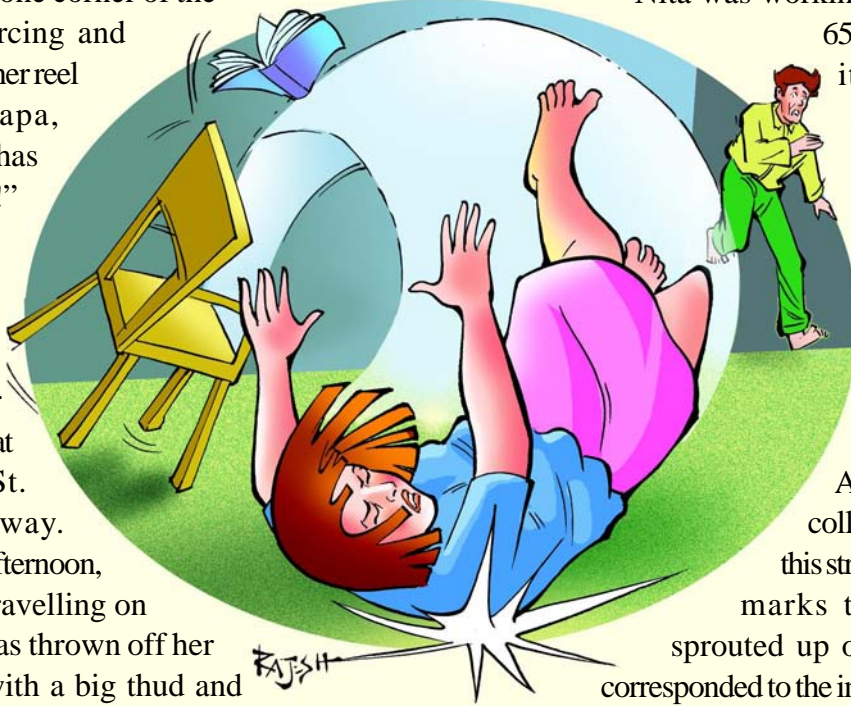
it or not, Nita Hust suddenly felt a severe pain down on her left leg. Then she observed bruises slowly beginning to appear one after the other and spreading upwards on one side of her body.

Awestruck, one of her colleagues bore witness to this strange phenomenon. The marks that spontaneously sprouted up on her body actually corresponded to the injuries of her twin sister

Nettie Porter.

Nettie and Nita once went shopping separately. Amazingly, they turned up buying the same apparels; even the shoes they bought were identical. Often it was found, when one of the sisters just thought of the other who was away and the other sister got the message and called up.

Five year old Silvia Landa one day burnt her right hand on the hot iron. Her twin Martha felt the pain 20km away. Both developed a burn on the same spot. Jayne Williamson fell and broke her nose. Surprisingly, her twin Claire's nose began to bleed. In 1973, 13-year-old Wendy Styles broke her left leg in the school playground.





While she was being attended to, her twin sister Denise fell and broke her right leg.

Twins James Springer and James Lewis were adopted at birth by two different families in Ohio, U.S.A. The brothers met in 1979 at the age of 39. They discovered an astonishing similarity in their lives. Both were named James by their foster parents and they grew up with adopted brothers called Larry. Both of them liked arithmetic and disliked spelling and owned pet dogs called Troy. The incredible fact was that the two brothers married twice. They divorced their first wives who had the same name, Linda. Then they were remarried to two young women, both called Betty. Both had a son each, one was named James Allan and the other James Allan.

The James twins had the same hobbies, carpentry and technical drawing. They were obsessive nail-biters and developed migraine headaches at the age of 18 and stopped having them completely again at the same age. Each stood 6 ft tall and weighed 80 kg and had heart problems. They voted for the same candidate for three consecutive presidential elections. They worked part time as Deputy Sheriffs. James Springer and James Lewis thus led such parallel lives without having ever met nor being aware of each other's existence.

Peet Snyman and Daan Snyman were identical twins born in 1945 in Pretoria, South Africa. Both had appendicitis within some days of each other. Then they suffered from meningitis almost at the same time. When both were seven years old, they were bitten in the leg by different dogs. In December 1964 Peet lost two of his fingers on his left hand while repairing the fan in his car. A fortnight later, Daan lost the same two fingers but on his right hand due to a car accident. In February 1978 Peet lost his right eye in an accident. Some months later Daan too lost his left one again in some mishap.

It is a wonder how these identical twins led such astonishing parallel lives, even

when some of them were separated at birth and brought up absolutely in different conditions? Is it just sheer play of chance?

Twin brothers John and Arthur Mowforth were both 66 years old when they had heart attacks on the evening of 22 May, 1975. They were both rushed to hospitals in two different places in England where they died that same evening. In 1894 Margaret Cox and Florence Parrish of Georgia were born with a difference of two hours from each other. Finally, both died on the same day, in 1981, two hours apart; Margaret who had been born first, died first.

Nancy and Ruth Schneider were twins born in 1927 in Virginia, U.S.A. They were taking an exam in a college, sitting in opposite corners of the hall. According to one of the examiners, Dr. Sara Roody, they not only chose the same subject for their essay but they wrote the same story in which every word matched.

Are these incredible incidents mere coincidences and blind chance? Or are there a deeper meaning and truth behind them? Researchers and scientists are still baffled!





**Send your questions to :**  
**Ask Away**  
**Chandamama India Ltd.**  
**No.82 Defence Officers Colony**  
**Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097**  
**or e-mail to**  
**askaway@chandamama.org.**

**Q** **Who was the first Englishman to visit India? My brother's friend who holds a Ph.D. in History, told us that Sir Thomas Roe was the person to be credited with that position. But our teacher said it was one John Newbery. Who is right?**

**- Sukumar Gadgil, Pune**

**A** Both may be wrong, I'm afraid. So far as records go, one Father Thomas Stephens was the first Englishman to visit India and settle down in Goa. That was in 1579. So far as John Newbery is concerned, he visited India in 1583 and met Emperor Akbar. He had brought a letter from Queen Elizabeth I and hence may be called an ambassador.

Sir Thomas Roe, of course, is most famous of these early English visitors. He came as the official ambassador of King James I and was in the court of Emperor Jahangir. He obtained some facilities for the English East India Company to carry on their business in India. That was in 1615. The same year a number of Englishmen touched India because

Nicholas Downton led a fleet against the Portuguese, in a naval battle that took place close to Surat.

**Q** **I desire to be a good speaker. Can you tell me the rules to be followed?**

**-Nipun S. Jha, Jamshedpur.**

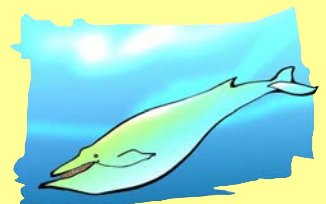
**A** I understand that there are several rules prescribed by made-easy books and institutes teaching the art of oration. You can learn them, though I am not sure how much they can help. What is important, you must be sure that you have something worthwhile to say; that you have the right to claim others' time and attention. Secondly, you must express them with sincerity and clarity. That should be achievement enough. For the rest, I can recite a doggerel. Though I do not know who its author is, I hope you would only grin and bear with my quoting it:

*A speech that is full of sparkling wit  
 Will keep its hearers grinning,  
 Provided that the end of it  
 Is close to the beginning!*



Do you know who is the model for the popular queen's face on the playing cards? It is none other than Queen Elizabeth of York, the wife of King Henry VII. She was the Queen of England when card-playing became a fashion.

The blue whale can go without food for six months. The nutrition stored in its bladder sustains it during such long periods.







# READ AND REACT

## A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS

Cash prize of Rs. 250 for the best entry

### Read the story below:

Many pilgrims were on their way to a temple atop a hill. It was a long and monotonous journey, marked by complete silence.

After a while, one young man asked another, "Where are you from?"

With a smile, the other answered, "I'm from Bilaspur."

"That's nice! I, too, come from Bilaspur. In which part of the town do you live?"

"In the eastern sector."

"What a coincidence! I, too, live in the eastern sector. Where exactly is our house?" the first young man persisted in his query.

"I live in the third house to the left of the Siva temple," replied the second young man.

"That's great! I, too, live in the third house to the left of the Siva temple!" exclaimed the first young man.



**Now, imagine how the two young men would have continued their conversation or how the other pilgrims would have reacted to their dialogue, keeping in mind the following points:**

- ◆ Could there be any other to be added to the string of coincidences?
- ◆ Did the other pilgrims find anything strange in the conversation between the two young men?
- ◆ Think of a satisfactory conclusion for the story and suggest a suitable title.

Write your reaction in 100-150 words and send it to us in an envelope superscribed "Read and React". Attach the coupon given below:

**CLOSING DATE : February 29, 2004**

Name -----Age-----Date of birth-----

School -----Class-----

Home address-----

-----

-----Pincode-----

Parent's signature

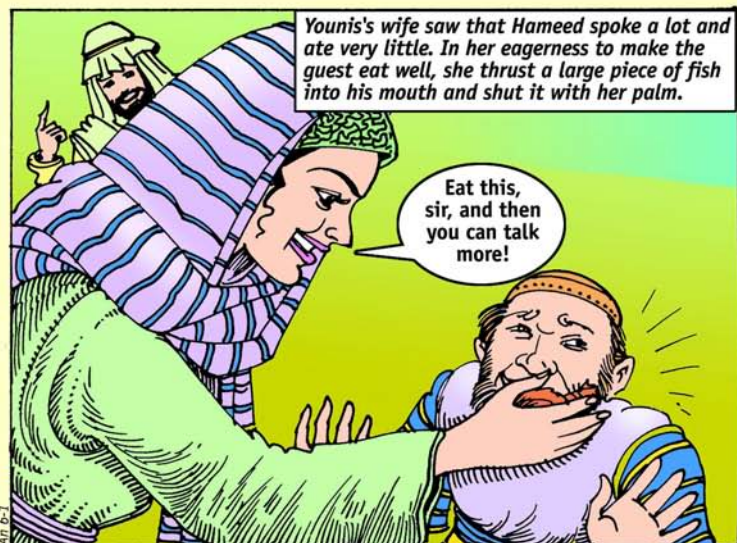
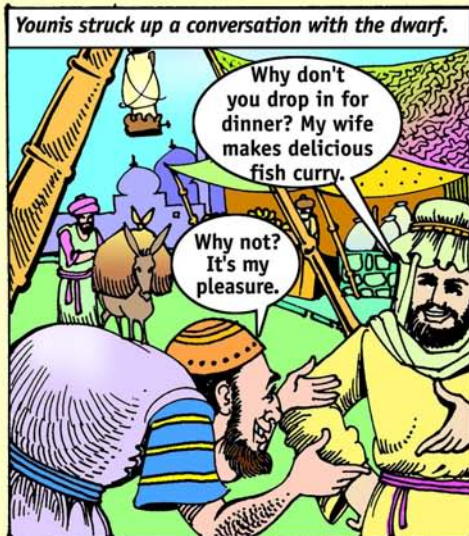
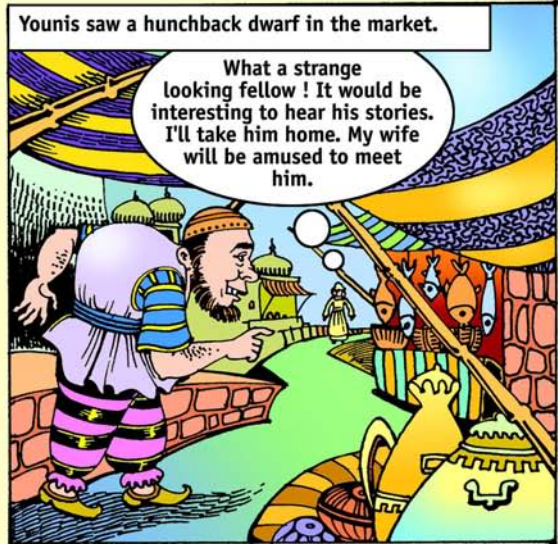
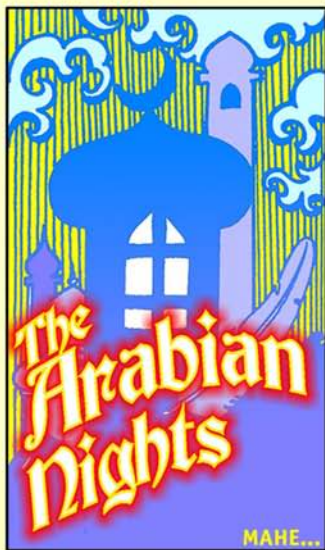
Participant's signature

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# The Arabian Nights : Jester's Joke



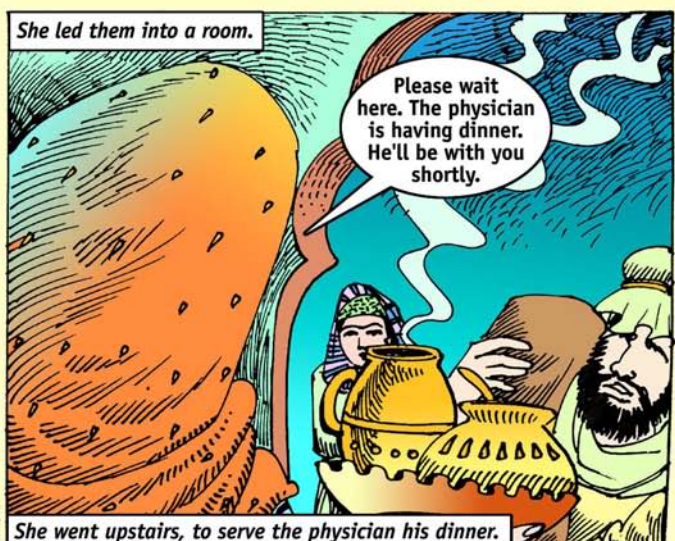
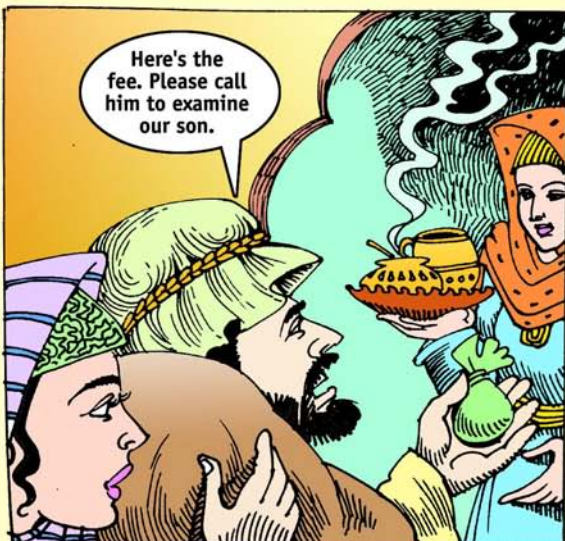
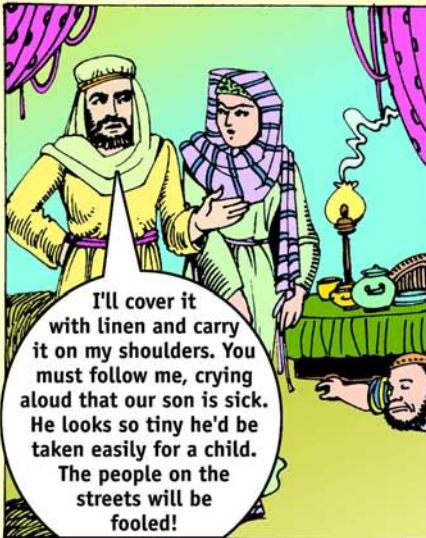
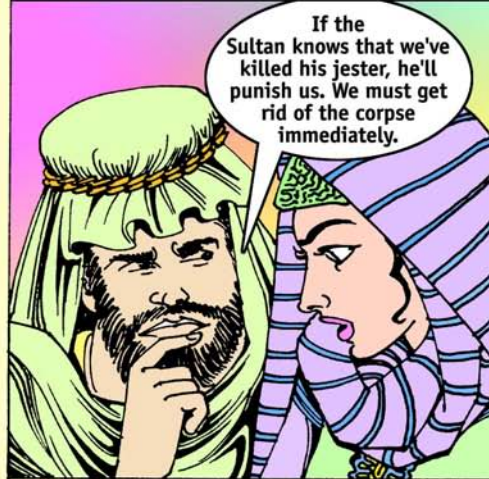


# The Arabian Nights : Jester's Joke

A fishbone got stuck in Hameed's throat and he died on the spot.



Younis and his wife were dumbfounded. They did not know what to do.



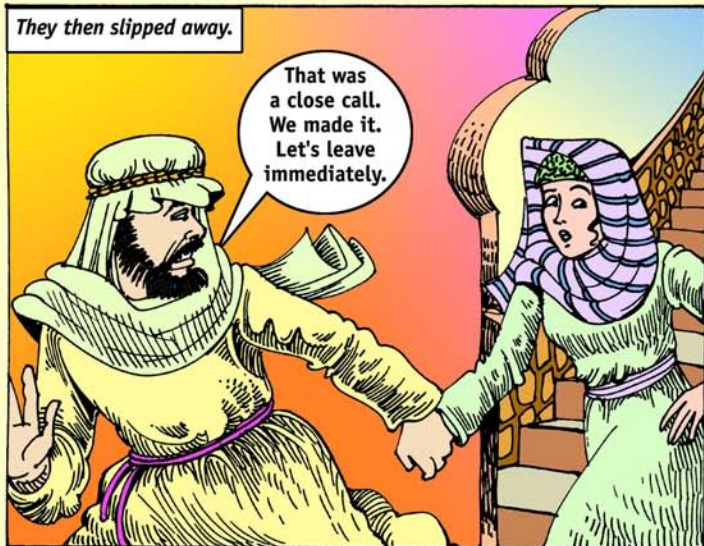


## The Arabian Nights : Jester's Joke

As soon as the maid left the room, Younis and his wife climbed the stairs and placed Hameed's corpse against the door at the top of the stairs.



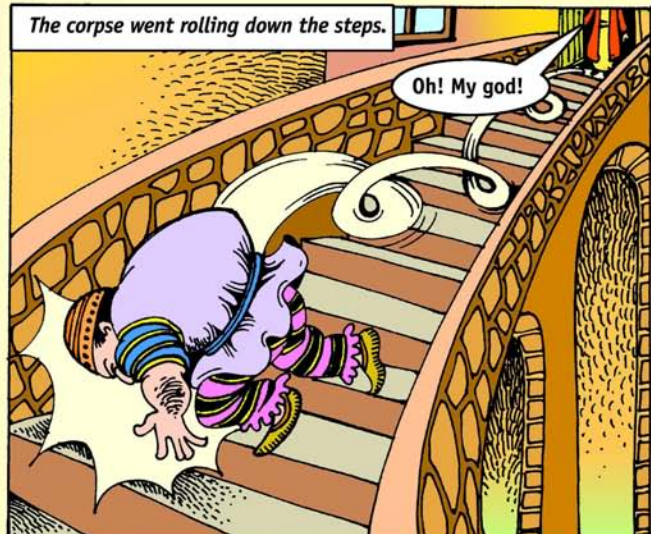
They then slipped away.



A little later, the physician finished his dinner and opened the door to let the visitors in.



The corpse went rolling down the steps.



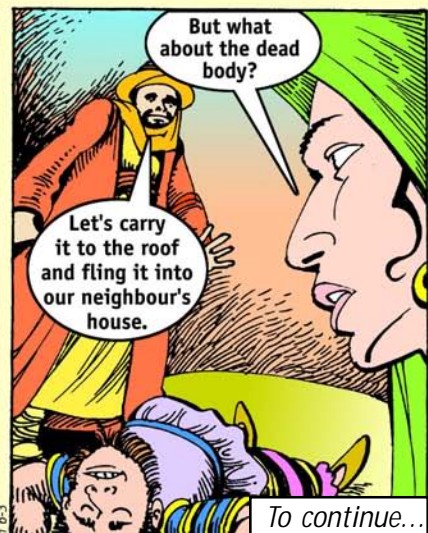
The physician rushed down and stopped the corpse from rolling further.



He died falling from the stairs. It happened because I opened the door against which he was leaning. It'll become a scandal when his folks return.



But what about the dead body?

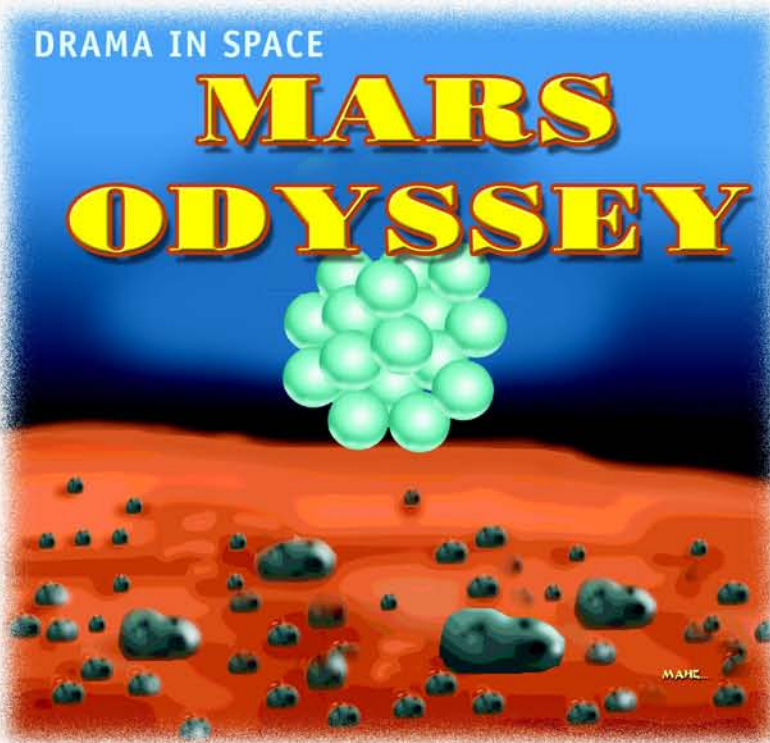


To continue...



Science-fiction in the form of reading literature as well as movies have for several years provided us with exciting details of Mars and the people from that planet visiting the earthlings—all from pure imagination. Now, with the actual landing of NASA's rover *Spirit* on the Martian soil on January 3, prospective writers can very well depend on more factual information flashed by the cameras fixed on the Marslander.

The NASA vehicle had taken some seven months to traverse more than 400 million kilometres and what has been described as a 'hair-raising ride' through the Martian atmosphere before it made a flawless landing three days after the New Year. Exulting over their success, the NASA scientists said it was "a big night for NASA." They are said to have "let out whoops of joy", as the first signals from the *Spirit*



indicated that it had survived the landing in Gusev Crater, a basin just south of the Martian equator. The rover depended on a heat shield, parachute and rockets that ensured a slow descent to the surface, besides a cushion of balloons. The descent took exactly six minutes.

While the NASA scientists got busy in pinpointing the exact location on the Red

planet, as it is popularly called, the *Spirit* took less than 90 minutes "to set up and go to work", which included retracting its air bags (balloons) and deploying its solar panels.

The first photos in black-and-white came within 24 hours. They showed a flat, wind-swept surface dotted with rocks. One of the cameras even captured parts of the rover, like the tiny sundial it had carried to Mars.

The *Spirit* is a six-wheeled robot. It is expected to roam the planet for three months analysing the soil and rocks mainly to find out whether the planet ever had water which alone would have sustained any life. If it had, then we can sit back and say "Yes, Martians who came out of the pages of books and frames of films were a reality!"

In the last 40 years, some thirty probes had been sent to Mars, though only around ten of them survived the long journey. The *Spirit* is the fourth lander that touched down safely on the Martian soil. As recent as four years ago, NASA's Polar Lander really got into the Martian atmosphere, but there has since been no message from it to the earth!

*(More next month)*

## Indian on Mars

This does not mean that anybody has already landed on the Red planet! However, there is a lone Indian scientist with the NASA studying the nature of the Martian rocks. He is Amitabh Ghosh who works in conjunction with two crucial instruments on board the *Spirit*. His objective is, again, to determine whether life had ever existed on Mars. Dr. Ghosh, a former student of the IIT, Kanpur, was associated with the Mars Pathfinder Mission in 1997. His research fetched for him the NASA Mars Pathfinder Achievement Award.



# Achievers, young and old

**While India's Number One, Viswanathan Anand, is battling for his fourth Corus chess title in the super category, with all chances of winning it, some of our young players have of late been creating history.**

Meet 13-year-old **Dronavali Harika**, who became the country's youngest Woman Grandmaster (WGM) at Mumbai, bettering Koneru Humpy's record of annexing the title when she was 14. Harika is otherwise Asia's youngest WIM (Woman International Master). She had



**Dronavali Harika**

achieved this coveted position at the World Junior Championship held in Goa in 2002. In Mumbai, Harika made the final form by forcing a draw in the 49th move with the young chess sensation Parimarjan Negi.

On the basis of his outstanding performance at the Bad Weissee tournament in Germany in November last, **Parimarjan Negi** (10) of East Delhi has been declared India's youngest International Master.



**Parimarjan Negi**

He beat the record held by P.Harikrishna, who achieved IM standard when he was 13 years 7 months.

The recognition came two months after Parimarjan played in Germany. He was seeded 193 in a field on 438 players. He finished 36th in the competition.

The story goes that his father heard him retell *ad verbatim* some stories that he himself had told him nine months earlier. He recognised the boy's uncanny memory, and gifted him with a chessboard. The boy is averse to watching the

TV. "Why should I, when I get all the pleasure from my chessboard?" counters young Parimarjan.

One more norm and **Subbaraman Meenakshi** will be India's next WGM, like her elder sister S.Vijayalakshmi, who is India's first WGM. Meenakshi completed the most required third norm at the Commonwealth Chess Championship at Mumbai in January. She has already gone beyond the stipulated rating of 2300. Her first norm came at the British Championship in 2002 and the second in the Asian Women's Championship in August 2003.



**Subbaraman Meenakshi**

At Mumbai, Meenakshi drew with Vishal Sareen, which gave her a nine-game norm with one round to spare.

When Meenakshi's title is ratified by the FIDE, the Subbaraman sisters would probably be the world's first WGM sisters.

Playing that elite game of Golf, the 7-year-old Standard II student from Chennai, **Shivnaren**, finished in the Top 10 in the Fourth Annual World Championship conducted by the U.S. Kids Golf at Williamsburg in Virginia in November 2003.



**Shivnaren**

Seven hundred boys and girls aged 12 and under, drawn from 55 states in the USA and 20 other countries, participated in the



championship. Shivnaren trains five days in a week at the Nandanam Golf Course in Chennai. His elder sister Anita, as well as father Srinivasan and mother Bhuvana are golfers. No wonder, did you say?



**Saurav Ghosal**

In squash, India's **Saurav Ghosal** (17) created history by winning the prestigious British Junior Open under-19 boys title in England early in January.

In the last one year, Saurav has been making waves in the international arena. India has never won a British Junior Open title since its inception in 1980.

In the girls category, India's No. 1 Joshna Chinappa reached the finals but lost to World Champion Omneya Abdel Kawy of Egypt.

At the 66th edition of the Corus Championship being played at Wijk aan Zee, in Netherlands, 34-year-old **Viswanathan Anand** is the defending champion. This is his ninth appearance at the Corus.

In 1989 he shared the title on his first appearance, and he was only 19 then. In 1998



**Viswanathan Anand**

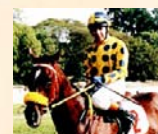
he shared the title with Kramnik. He got his third title (unshared) in 2003. He already holds six titles in nine tournament appearances.

Five of his titles had come from Rapid Chess and the sixth in classical chess in the Corus tournament last year. As this goes to press, he has collected 7 points after ten games.

Meet **Silva Storai**, who won a Classic horse race, the Hyderabad Derby, last year. It was only the third Classic win in the world by a woman jockey.

She got a licence only in March 1993. In 1996, she helped start the Embassy Riding School near Bangalore.

Storai, who is an Italian by birth, came to India in 1978 and fell in love with the country and the turf. India had two women jockeys earlier, in Hema, who has now faded from racing, and Roopa who is yet to win a Classic.



**Silva Storai**

## Mumbai Marathon has lone runner



**John Wallace**

John Wallace (59) of Florida, USA, has been participating in marathon runs for the last 25 years and has already run 216 marathons. He sent in his name for the Mumbai International Marathon 2004 scheduled for January 12. The date suited him as his son was getting married in Vadodara, Gujarat, on January 18.

He made his travel plans for himself and his family. As they were preparing for the journey, he came to know that the event had been postponed to January 24. It was impossible for him to change the plans or to travel to India a second time. But he decided he must run a marathon in Mumbai.

So, he persuaded the promoters to arrange for his run on the original date -January 12. And he ran all the 42.2km *alone* under the glare of the street lights, clocking 3 hours 50 minutes. This might not be taken into account when the event is officially held on January 24. He was accompanied by a vehicular escort provided by the promoter and given the athletic gear, as well as the mandatory drinking water facility. He had the satisfaction that he ran the full course, and also had had the experience of loneliness of long-distance running.

# ALONE IN THE JUNGLE

**T**he sun was very hot. A little breeze was loitering among the thick brushes. Dina was tired. Sweat trickled from his forehead. He had not eaten anything since early morning. Dina had lost his way while returning home. He had already walked a long distance. He was still far away from his little village. The woods always marvelled him. He was delighted with the enchanting beauty of the blue mountains and the thick forests. He was now fully aware of the loneliness. There was no one in sight.

Dina was the son of Kapu, the chief of a mountain tribe. He was 12 years old. Though a young boy, he had enough strength even to wrestle with a grown up man. He could run as a deer; climb trees as a squirrel; and swim as a dolphin. He liked adventures. His father was away from the village when Dina had set out on his journey to the woods.

There were other tribes in the woods. Far in the deep woods fearsome mountain tribes were dwelling. They were very cruel to other tribes. Dina knew that well. He had therefore, not been allowed to go far from his little village.

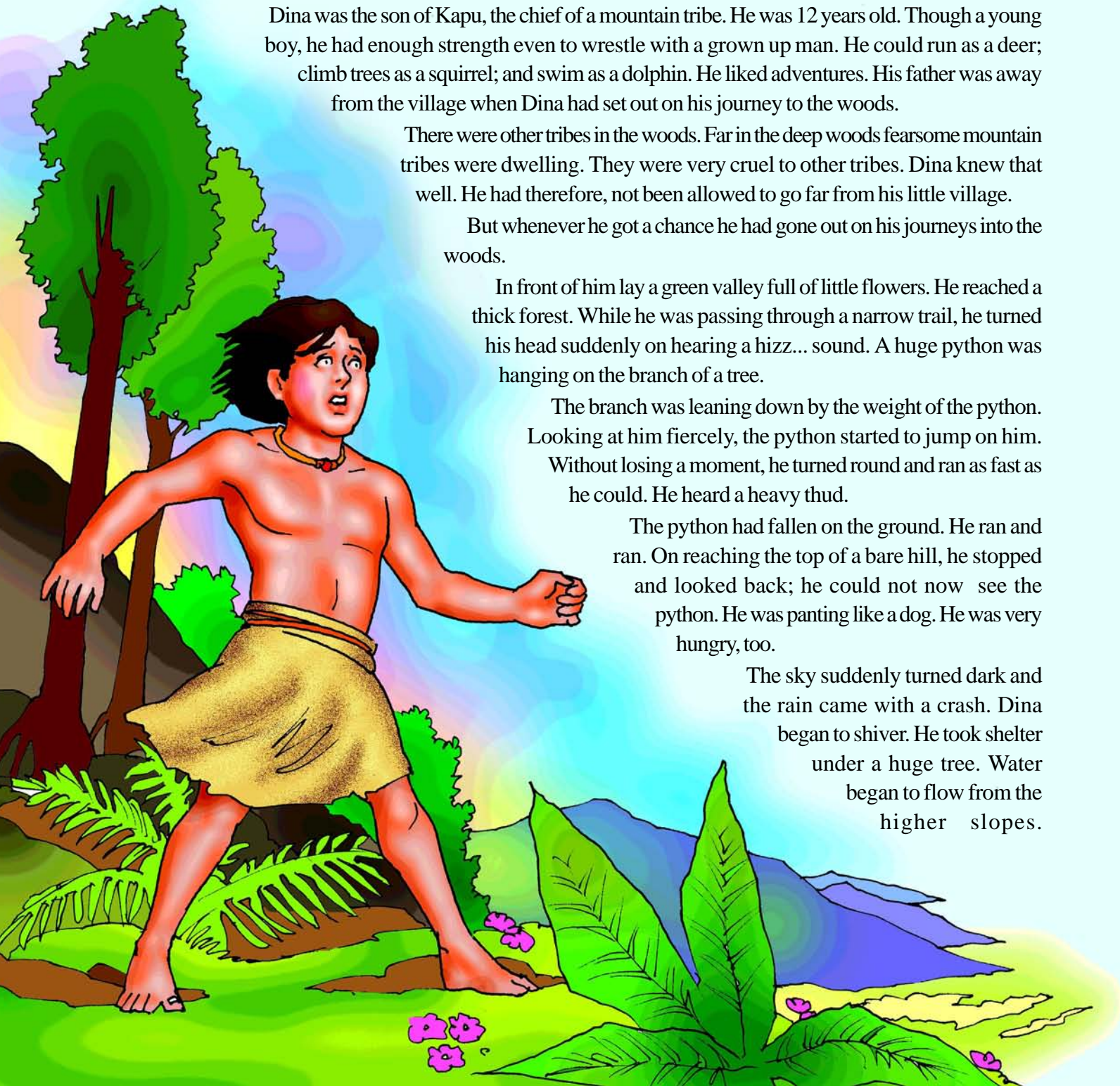
But whenever he got a chance he had gone out on his journeys into the woods.

In front of him lay a green valley full of little flowers. He reached a thick forest. While he was passing through a narrow trail, he turned his head suddenly on hearing a hizz... sound. A huge python was hanging on the branch of a tree.

The branch was leaning down by the weight of the python. Looking at him fiercely, the python started to jump on him. Without losing a moment, he turned round and ran as fast as he could. He heard a heavy thud.

The python had fallen on the ground. He ran and ran. On reaching the top of a bare hill, he stopped and looked back; he could not now see the python. He was panting like a dog. He was very hungry, too.

The sky suddenly turned dark and the rain came with a crash. Dina began to shiver. He took shelter under a huge tree. Water began to flow from the higher slopes.





When the rain stopped, it was still dark. He was soaked in rain water. He started to walk again as it was not safe to stay there. He had already seen two or three wolves at a distance. They might be hungry. His eyes got accustomed with the darkness. The earth under his feet was muddy. He was now going through a rocky hillside.

The rain came down again. Dina walked through the darkness. He did not know the direction to his village. He was not afraid of the sounds and movements of the wild animals. Two times he slipped and fell down. His body was covered with the wet mud.

There were scratches on his elbow. Blood dripped from his left knee cap. He rested for a while on a flat rock where there was no mud. Then he began to walk again.

He reached a place where there was a deep ravine on one side and a cliff of sheer rocks on the other side. He walked through the narrow space between the ravine and the cliff. The howling sounds of the wolves followed him. He turned back to look at the dark figures of wolves.

Suddenly the dampened earth under his feet gave way and he fell down in the dark depths of the ravine. His hands caught hold of the branch of a small tree overhanging in the ravine. He hooked his legs on the branch.

The branch was leaning down with his weight. He could not see from where he had fallen down or the bottom of the ravine. Actually he was in great danger. He saw that the tree he was hanging down was only a brush grown among the rocks in sheer cliffs. His skin had torn out at several places. There was blood on his hand. He was not aware of time. He was dead tired. He felt a severe pain on his hands. He could not stay there any longer.

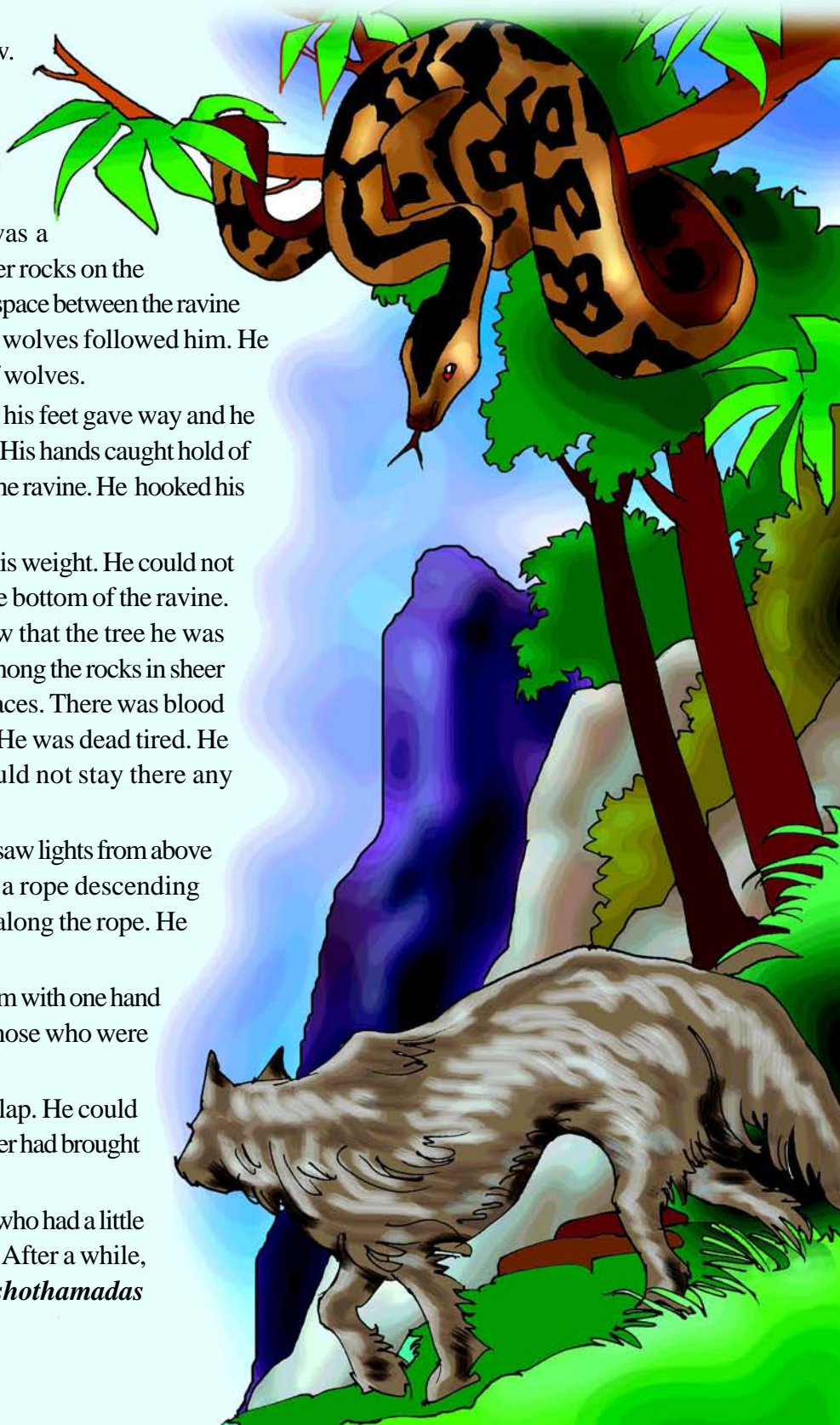
After some time he heard sounds and saw lights from above his head. He looked above. There was a rope descending from above and somebody came down along the rope. He could not at first see who he was.

It was his father himself. He carried him with one hand and held the rope with the other hand. Those who were waiting above pulled them up.

Now Dina was lying on his father's lap. He could not speak. He ate the little food that his father had brought for him.

He described everything to his father who had a little smile on his face. "You're a brave boy." After a while, they returned home.

- By C. Purushothamadas





★ **In articles and reviews of paintings, I often come across the word Cubism. Could you tell me something about it?**

- **Gowrie Sampath, Mysore**

This art movement came into being in the 20th century. Its early exponents were Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque (1882-1963). It introduced geometric shapes, often interlocking, and sometimes showing aspects of the subject (of painting) from different angles. Of course, this is not possible if the subject is to be viewed as if in real life. This style led to abstract as well as non-objective art.

★ **Why is it called Roget's Thesaurus? How is it different from an ordinary dictionary?** - **M.Subhaschander, Jalpaiguri**

Peter Mark Roget (1779-1869) started his career as a medical doctor. He spent his leisure hours in compiling and classifying words so that writers and speakers could easily find synonyms. He started this compilation in 1805, but published his *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* on his retirement in 1852. It works on a different principle from the dictionary style of words, their meanings and their usage. The words in a dictionary are in the alphabetical order; in Thesaurus, the words are arranged under classifications.

★ **What is the origin of gunpowder?**

- **Reginald Simon, Chennai**

The Chinese invented what Roger Bacon in the 13th century called "the funny substance" several hundred years before that English poet

thought of it. The Chinese used it for firecrackers. Only after it reached Europe from the Middle East could people find worse ends for its use. A German monk—of all persons—called Bertold Schwarz, was probably the first person to use it for a projectile. This was in the 14th century, when factories producing this stuff sprung up in several places.

★ **The Vetala in the famous Vikramaditya stories is sometimes translated as vampire. Any relationship with the real vampire?** - **Sambamoorthy, Maduravoyal**

The vampire belongs to the family of bats. To gain control over human beings, they suck their blood. Some ways to scare away vampires are to wear a necklace of garlic or, as some people believe, to show a crucifix. After reading half-a-dozen Vikram-vetala stories, you aren't scared of him, or are you?

## ALL THE ANSWERS

### PUZZLE DAZZLE

#### Amazing Stones

1. Amethyst, 2. Aquamarine 3. Diamond
4. Emerald, 5. Garnet, 6. Opal, 7. Pearl,
8. Peridot, 9. Ruby, 10. Sapphire,
11. Topaz, 12. Turquoise



#### Spot them out

First and fifth monkeys are similar.

#### What's the difference

Except Rabbit, all the others have unusual organs: the crow has ears, the deer has a long tail like that of a horse and the snake has legs.

#### Find the hidden fishes

There are six fishes hidden in places like fishing stick, under the tree, in the stem, on the branch and another in between two branches.



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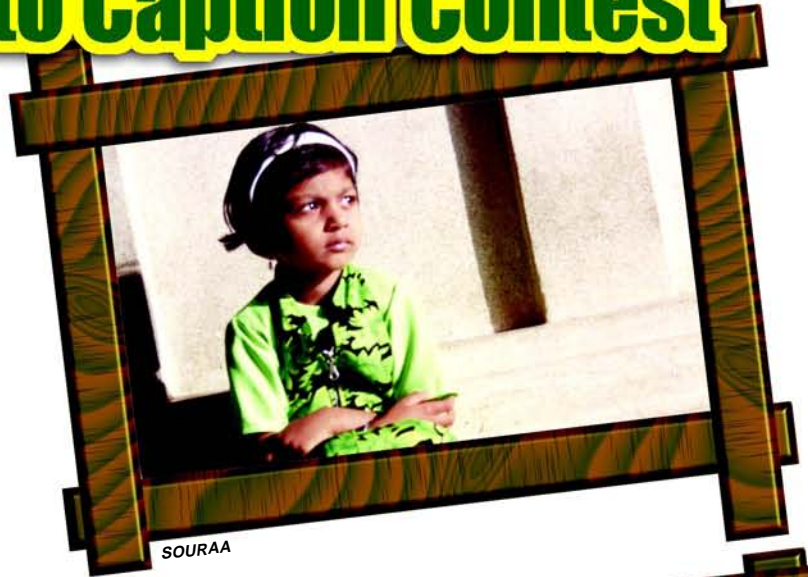
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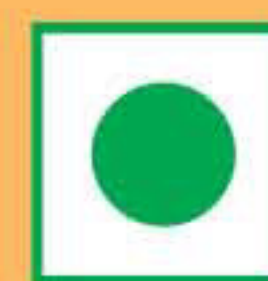


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